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# Mid-City Communities Plan

FINAL

AUGUST 4, 1998

Kensington-  
Talmadge

# Mid-City

## COMMUNITIES PLAN

Prepared by

**City of San Diego Planning Department**

202 C Street, MS 4A  
San Diego, CA 92101



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## MID-CITY COMMUNITIES PLAN AMENDMENTS

The following amendments have been incorporated into this May 2005 posting of this Plan:

<b>Amendment</b>	<b>Date Approved by Planning Commission</b>	<b>Resolution Number</b>	<b>Date Adopted by City Council</b>	<b>Resolution Number</b>
Mid-City Communities Plan approved			August 4, 1998	R-290608
Redesignates 6 acres from Residential (11-15 du/ac) to Open Space, 5.36 acres from Park to Institutional, and 2 acres from Open Space to Institutional associated with the Central Police Facility in City Heights	July 24, 2003		September 23, 2003	R-298418



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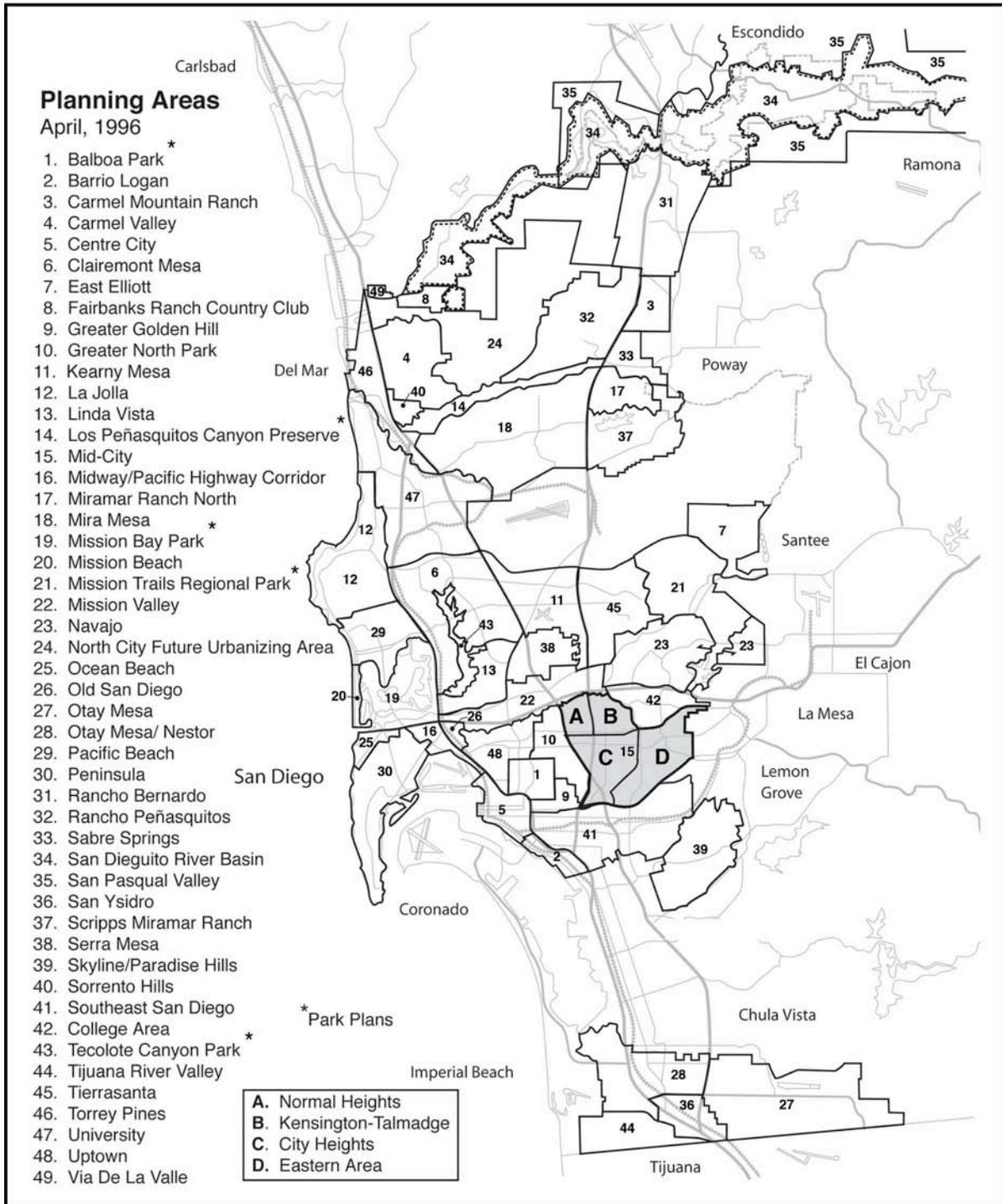
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**Figure 1  
Vicinity Map**



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## **I. PLAN SUMMARY**

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The Mid-City Communities Plan (Plan) represents the second update to one of the first community plans in San Diego: the 1965 “Mid-City Development Plan.” This update was prepared by the City of San Diego Community and Economic Development staff who were hired by the four Mid-City Communities Planning Groups as their technical consultants. With this update, the Plan has taken on a look quite different from its predecessors, and in fact quite different from all other City of San Diego community plans.

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### **COMMUNITIES WITHIN A COMMUNITY**

Mid-City is a cluster of four communities: Normal Heights, Kensington-Talmadge, City Heights, and Eastern, each with its own distinctive character, and its own community planning group. Probably the bond that ties these communities together the strongest is El Cajon Boulevard—Old Highway 80—which in earlier days tied the region to points east.

### **THE NEIGHBORHOODS**

The Plan focuses on the neighborhoods of Mid-City in formulating its goals and recommendations. A Neighborhoods Element gives an overview of each of 27 identified neighborhoods, summarizes the major issues of concern that resulted in the Plan’s recommendations, and shows the land use recommendations for the four communities of Mid-City.

### **LAND USE**

The most significant change to the land use map from the 1984 community plan is the reduction of residential densities. Permitted multifamily residential densities range up to 29 units per acre in residentially zoned areas and up to 73 units per acre for mixed-use projects in commercially zoned areas. The previous density maximums were 55 units per acre and 108 units per acre, respectively. Density reductions are triggered by the lack of adequate community facilities.

Changes to the land use map for commercial areas include the deletion of several neighborhood commercial areas where little or no commercial activity exists, and the restoration of commercial zoning on portions of University Avenue, Euclid Avenue, 43<sup>rd</sup> Street, and Fairmount Avenue where commercial activity is healthy even though it has been rezoned residential after adoption of the previous community plan.

There is presently very little in the way of industrial development in Mid-City. To help provide jobs for local residents, the addition of light manufacturing designated land in City Heights and the Eastern Area is recommended. These industries would be clean and compatible with the community, and would be encouraged to sell their wares from street front shops.

Small cottage industries are also recommended in some commercial and residential areas, with appropriate limitations.

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

Mid-City has never fully recovered from the loss of business since the construction of Interstate 8 (I-8) and suburban shopping centers in the 1950s. Business Improvement Districts have been very active and will continue to work to improve the business climate.

This Plan recommends a number of changes to the land use map to facilitate the addition and expansion of businesses along its commercial strips, which at present are too narrow to accommodate many modern enterprises along with the off-street parking needed to make them competitive.

A pedestrian orientation is recommended with storefronts and display windows near the sidewalk for most commercial areas.

Also recommended is an emphasis on capturing the local community's spending dollars by focusing on community goods and services.

Capitalizing on the community's diversity is recommended by fostering an International Marketplace.

A mixed-use "Mid-City Center" is recommended as a new hub for the community at the interchange of El Cajon Boulevard with the new State Route 15 (SR-15).

## **PUBLIC FACILITIES**

The lack of adequate public facilities, and in particular schools and parks, is the community's most pressing need. In addition to expanding many existing facilities, recommended new facilities include nine elementary schools, a community and neighborhood park, and a number of mini-parks. The Plan includes a financing plan to address those needs, and both interim and permanent restrictions on development to assure attainment of adequate facilities as quickly as possible.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

The demand for transit service is extremely high, taxing even the relatively high level of service provided. While there is frequent bus service, service to many areas outside of Mid-City, including most employment areas, is poor, and is recommended for improvement.

To better meet the communities' transit needs, trolley service is recommended on SR-15 and should be re-evaluated for its feasibility on El Cajon Boulevard. A trolley-shuttle system along University Avenue is also recommended for study.

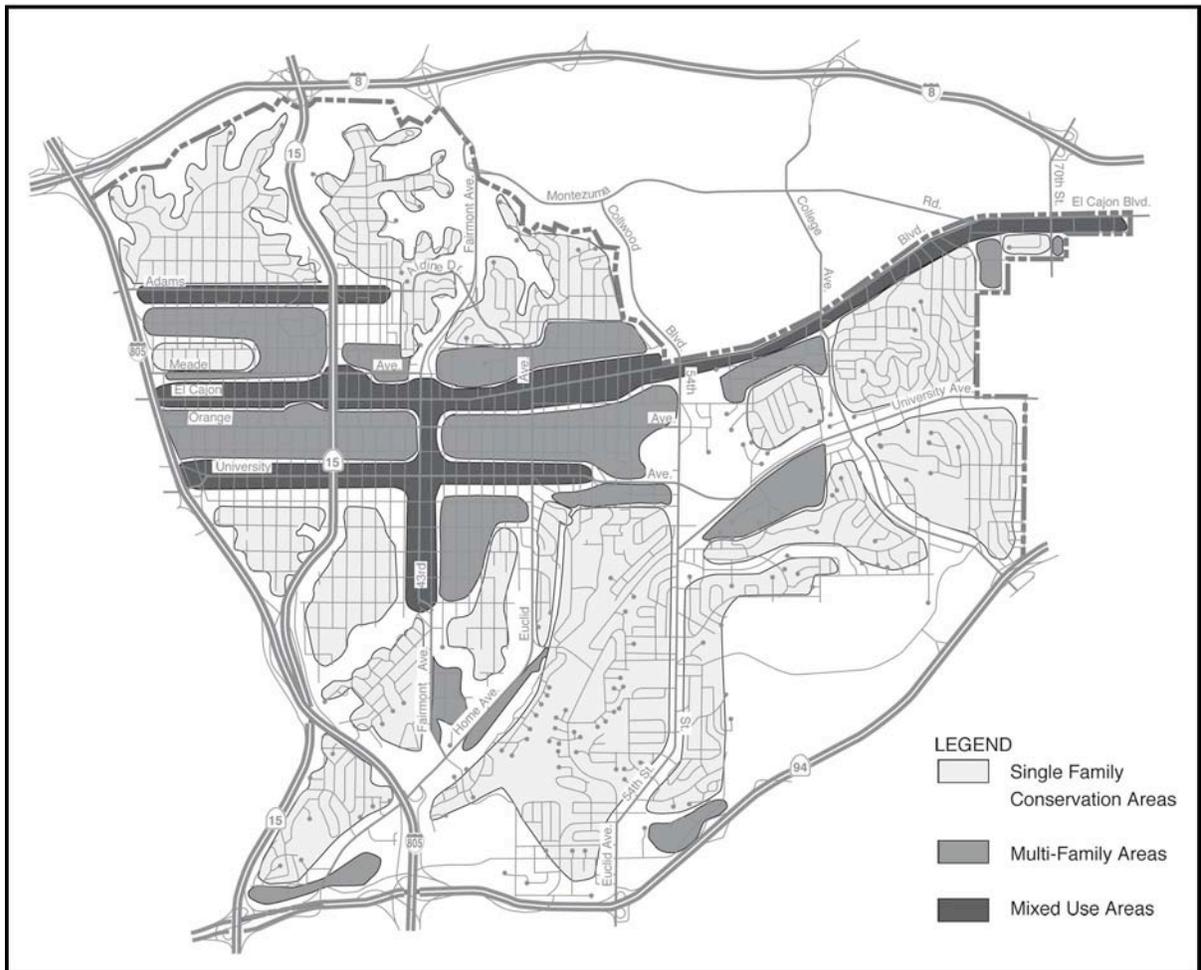
## **IMPLEMENTATION**

This communities plan is accompanied by a Facilities Financing Plan that identifies the number of facilities required by the Plan's projected population, their cost, financing by new development, and grants and other financing proposals required to make up the cost of existing public facility deficiencies. The projects included in the Facilities Financing Plan will be incorporated into the City's Capital Improvements Program.

## PLAN FORMAT

The Plan format attempts to focus directly on the issues and recommendations by using primarily a bullet format with only brief background statements. Existing and future revitalization action plans will supplement this communities plan and are intended to bring about immediate implementation of both long-range and short-range efforts.

**Figure 2**  
**Conceptual Land Use Plan**



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## II. VISION 2020

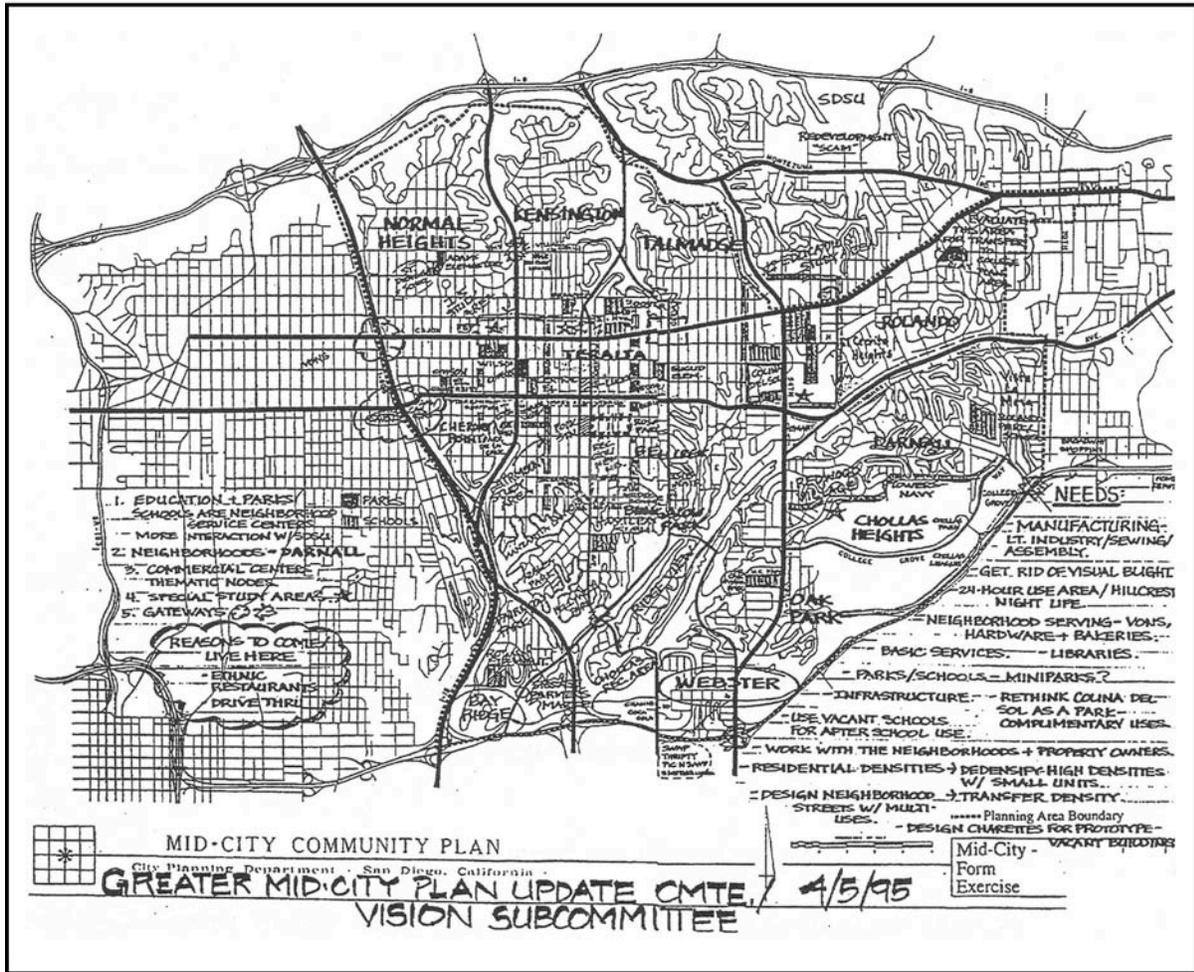
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Our vision is for the re-establishment of a deep-rooted community: one that attracts new residents and whose inhabitants are planning to stay. We envision a stable community close to everything within San Diego's urban core that offers a high quality of life and is characterized by the following:

- Neighborhoods that are safe
- Neighborhoods that recognize, maintain, and enhance their unique identity and provide an excellent environment for family living
- A community, in partnership with local government and surrounding communities, that sees its physical, economic, and social evolution as a continuing process of planning and development activity oversight that endures beyond the completion of this planning stage
- An integrated open space system of natural canyons, park grounds, urban plazas, and landscaped streets
- Preserved environmental, cultural, and historic resources
- A diverse array of attractive and affordable housing types that cater to a full range of family and living styles
- First class schools, educational and recreational facilities
- Buildings of excellent design within the framework of a community order of appropriately arranged land uses
- Vital commercial, business, and employment centers
- A functioning transportation system that connects to the larger regional system and features landscaped streets, fixed rail, electric buses and trolleys, and intra-community shuttles
- Streets, businesses, and public gathering spaces that promote interaction among residents of Mid-City and that will draw people from elsewhere to discover Mid-City
- We believe that the Mid-City is a vibrant and important part of the larger urbanized core of the City of San Diego. The area shares opportunities and constraints with surrounding communities, including: a defining system of mesas, hills and canyons; cultural and economic diversity; superior access to freeways; and a maturing stock of residential and commercial structures.

The map in **Figure 3** was one of the early products of interactive community involvement that identified home grown ideas for improvement. Many of these are included as recommendations for implementation of this Plan.

Figure 3  
Mid-City Vision Map



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### **III. INTRODUCTION**

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Mid-City is a land area located in the heart of the City of San Diego and with a population in excess of 130,000 people it is as large as a moderate size city. Its numerous neighborhoods—as diverse as all of the San Diego Region—have been categorized into four communities: Normal Heights, Kensington-Talmadge, City Heights, and Eastern Area.

The westernmost communities began their development in the early part of the twentieth century. They feature a "grid" street pattern and strip commercial development typical of the era. The easternmost area developed after the Second World War with a curvilinear street system, and with commercial development clustered into shopping centers.

From north to south, the community reveals a social gradient: Kensington and Talmadge have a history connected with early California movie making, while other communities such as City Heights were working class communities. More recently, immigrants from around the world have found Mid-City neighborhoods to be their first home in the United States, creating a very special international flavor in the central portion of Mid-City.

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**The Community**

**Scope and Purpose**

**Legislative Framework**

**Ancillary Documents**

## **THE COMMUNITY**

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The Mid-City communities are centrally located in the San Diego metropolitan area, northeast of Centre City, south of Mission Valley, and west of the City of La Mesa. It is a gently rolling mesa divided by canyons on both the north and south edges of the community. Hills and canyons in the eastern portion of the community feed into the Chollas Valley system, which bisects the area from northeast to southwest.

Mid-City includes some of the older communities in the City of San Diego, with an estimated 52,510 dwelling units and 132,466 residents in 1997. Much of the westerly portion of the community was originally developed in the 1910-1930 era, before the Second World War, while development east of 54<sup>th</sup> Street generally occurred in the post World War II period. Overall, residential development is predominantly of single-family homes, with pockets of varying multifamily densities ranging from duplex development, to early century apartment courts, garden apartments and high-density three-story plus apartment development.

Commercial and other business development has been concentrated along the major traffic arterials. El Cajon Boulevard was once the main east-west highway for the region (Highway 80) until Interstate 8 (I-8) was built in the late 1950s. The Boulevard still serves as Mid-City's main thoroughfare. Other major streets that provide business services in Mid-City are: University Avenue, another east-west thoroughfare parallel to the Boulevard; and, Adams Avenue, the site of early neighborhood commercial activity. Land uses along these transportation corridors are characterized by strip commercial development servicing a variety of residential neighborhoods, ranging from high-density apartments near the corridors, to single-family dwellings to the north and south along canyons.

## **SCOPE AND PURPOSE**

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This Mid-City Communities Plan is designed to supplement the City of San Diego Progress Guide and General Plan (General Plan) policies. It accomplishes this by identifying specific community issues and specific policies that build on those already embodied in the General Plan. This Mid-City Communities Plan once approved will become a part of the City's General Plan document.

It is the intent of this communities plan to identify a “vision” for the future development of the four Mid-City communities of Normal Heights, Kensington-Talmadge, City Heights, and Eastern. The Plan contains policies that implement that vision, and an implementation strategy that establishes the timing and financing required to implement the policies and vision.

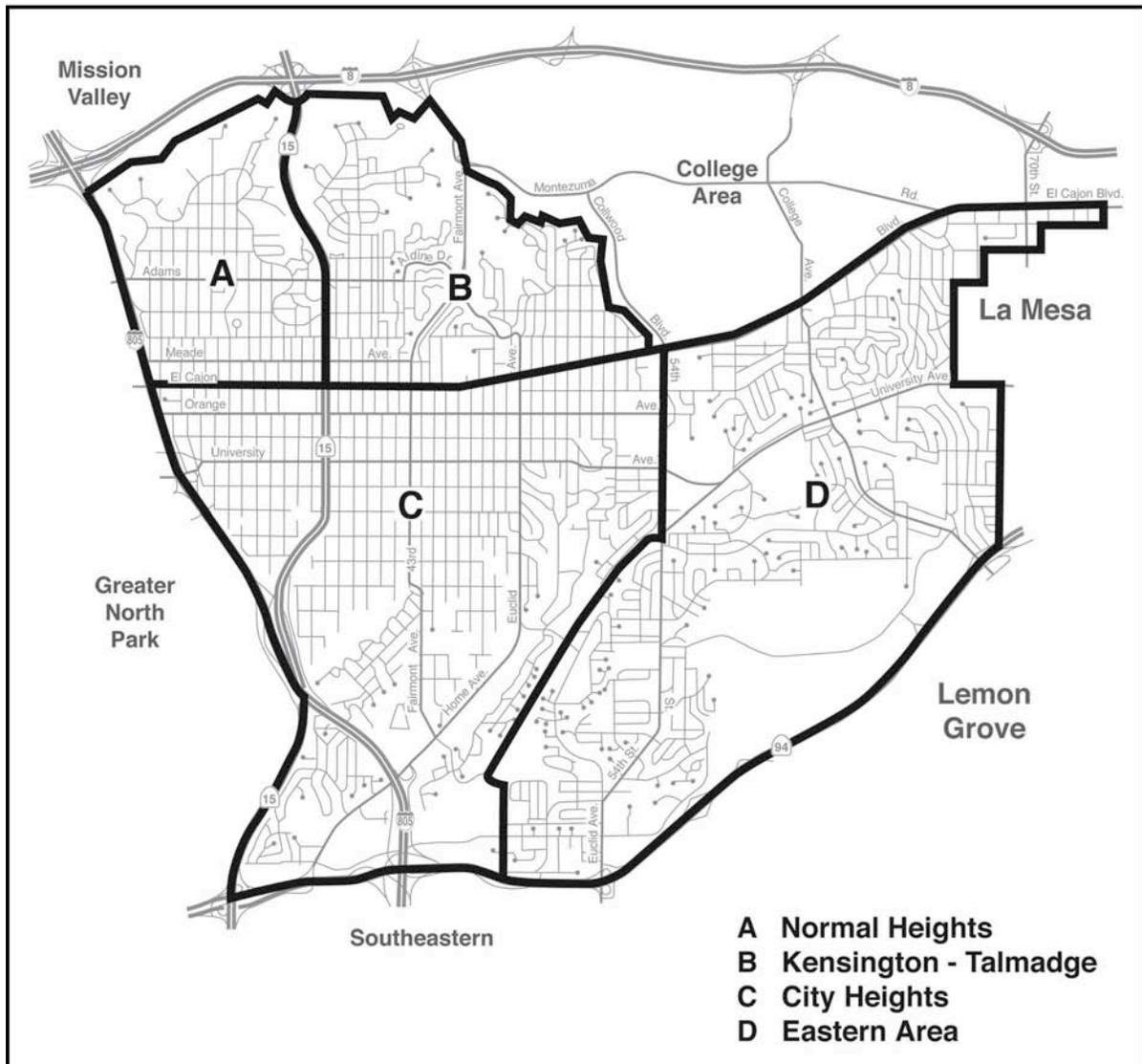
While this Plan sets forth many proposals for implementation, it does not establish new regulations nor does it rezone property. It does however put the policies in motion that will be followed by public hearings to rezone property in accordance with the Plan's recommendations. This Plan also incorporates a financing program that will be subject to

subsequent City Council actions, incorporating the recommendations into the City's Capital Improvements Program.

This Mid-City Communities Plan replaces the previous community plan originally adopted on December 4, 1984 by resolutions Number R-262091. This 1984 community plan in turn replaced the original Mid-City Development plan adopted on August 5, 1965.

Adoption of this Plan requires an amendment to the General Plan for the City of San Diego, consistent with Council Policy 600-7.

**Figure 4**  
**Mid-City Communities**



## LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

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As stated earlier, the Mid-City Communities Plan is an element of the City's General Plan, providing tailored policies that more clearly implement General Plan Policies and purpose. As such, this Plan is enabled by legislative framework on federal, state and local levels. Some of the more significant legislation applicable to this Plan is described below:

- California Government Code Section 65800 (State Planning and Zoning Law) gives Local Government the right to regulate land use within its jurisdictional boundaries. Such regulation in turn requires that a citywide land use plan be established.
- California Government Code Section 65350 (State Planning and Zoning Law) gives authority to local government for the preparation of general plans. The Code further specifies required and optional elements that must appear in every plan. The legislation also provides means for adopting and administering these plans. This Mid-City Community Plan meets the state requirements.
- Federal legislation and California Government Code Chapter 4.3 require that local government agencies provide affordable housing and ready access to it through housing programs and development incentives. This Plan identifies such programs and incentives consistent with the General Plan's Housing Element.
- California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires that all government actions be subject to environmental review. The environmental review process identifies areas where environmental quality is affected, and requires that appropriate environmental mitigation be identified. This Plan is subject to such environmental review.
- Federal and state regulations such as the U.S. Clean Air Act and the California Regional Air Quality Strategy recommend that air quality issues be considered in all land use and transportation plans. The environmental review to this Plan addresses these impacts.
- Federal and State Water Quality legislation require that impacts on water quality, both surface and subsurface be addressed. The environmental review to this Plan addresses these impacts.
- The City's Municipal Code regulates the development of land and other policies contained in this Plan. The Plan's implementation will require that rezonings be undertaken to better match land use policy recommendations to regulatory controls.
- In addition to legislation, the City Council has adopted a number of policies that are used as guidelines for implementation of numerous community plan recommendations.

## ANCILLARY DOCUMENTS

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A number of background documents prepared over the years were used as reference in the preparation of this Plan. In a few cases, comprehensive studies were made as part of this planning program, which, for the sake of brevity, are also referenced. While these documents are not adopted as part of this Plan, they provide essential information that was used in the development of its policies.

Documents include economic development studies, business enhancement studies, residential improvement studies, traffic studies, transit studies, open space and park studies, environmental, redevelopment and financial studies. An annotated bibliography of these documents is provided in **Appendix A**.

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## **IV. PLAN ELEMENTS**

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**IV-A Neighborhoods Element**

**IV-B Natural and Cultural Resources Element**

**IV-C Urban Design Element**

**IV-D Land Use Element**

**IV-E Economic Development Element**

**IV-F Public Facilities and Services Element**

**IV-G Transportation Element**

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## **IV-A NEIGHBORHOODS ELEMENT**

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The communities of Mid-City are a collection of diverse neighborhoods, each with its own look, feel, history, and culture. Each neighborhood's assets and opportunities can be used to enhance the area's overall character and add to the health and vitality of the entire Mid-City.

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### **Normal Heights**

Adams North  
Adams Park  
Cherokee Park

### **Kensington-Talmadge**

Kensington  
Talmadge

### **City Heights**

Corridor  
Teralta West  
Teralta East  
Colina Park  
Cherokee Point  
Castle  
Azalea Park  
Hollywood Park  
Fairmount Park  
Bayridge  
Fairmount Village  
Swan Canyon  
Chollas Creek  
Fox Canyon  
Islenair  
Ridgeview

### **Eastern Area**

Darnall  
El Cerrito Heights  
Oak Park  
Rolando  
Rolando Park  
Webster

## **BACKGROUND**

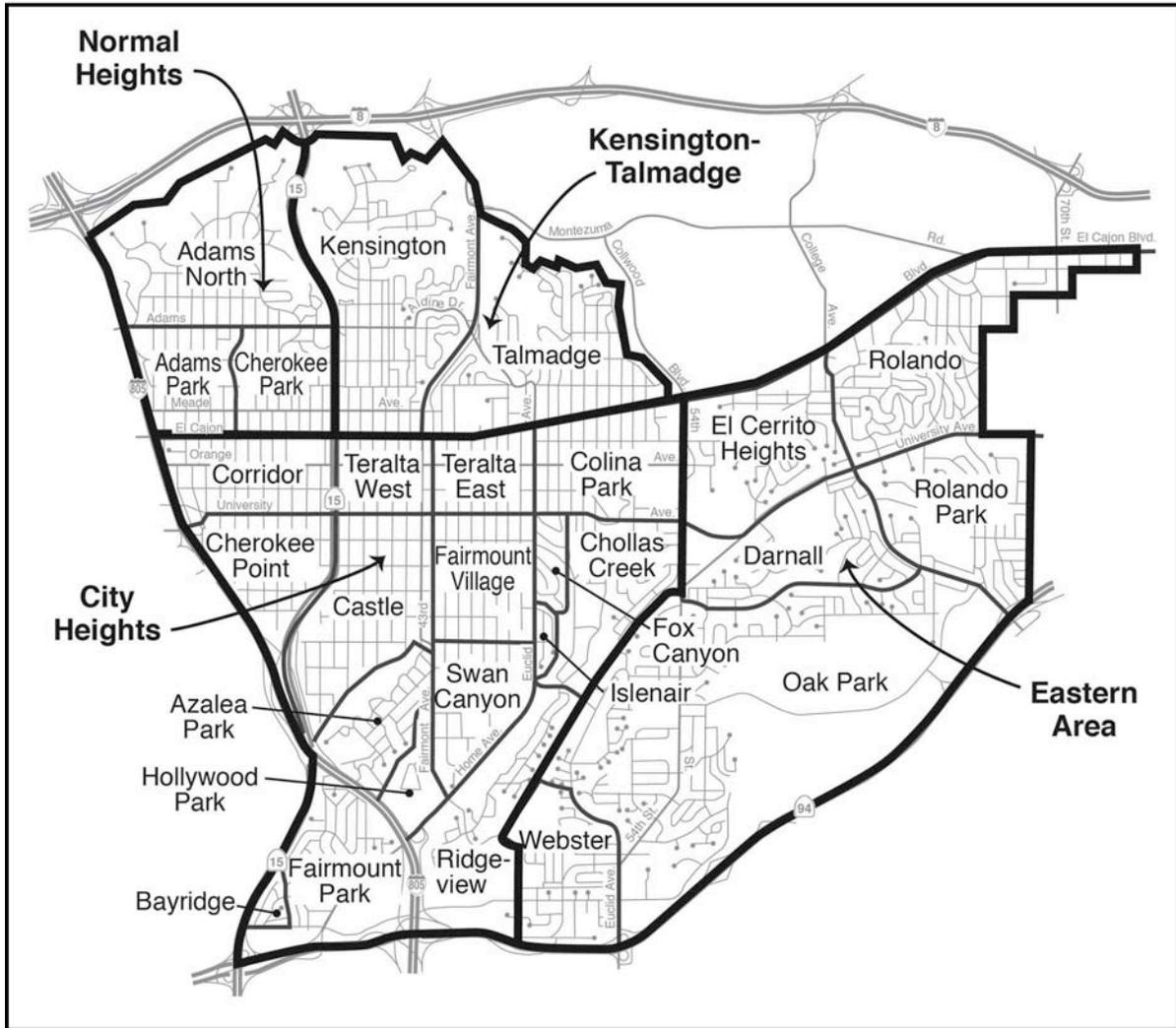
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Twenty-seven neighborhoods have been identified within the four communities of Mid-City: Normal Heights, Kensington-Talmadge, City Heights, and Eastern Area. While neighborhood boundaries are not hard and fast, a major determinant of the boundaries and neighborhoods illustrated in this Plan was the existence of active community associations. These organizations help neighborhoods focus on their needs and improvement opportunities, greatly enhancing their chances of success. These neighborhood organizations exist in addition to the recognized community planning groups that represent each of the four subareas.

The following is a brief description of each neighborhood and a list of some of the more dominant issues confronted by each. These issues were identified by the community in the development of this Plan, and are addressed in its various elements.

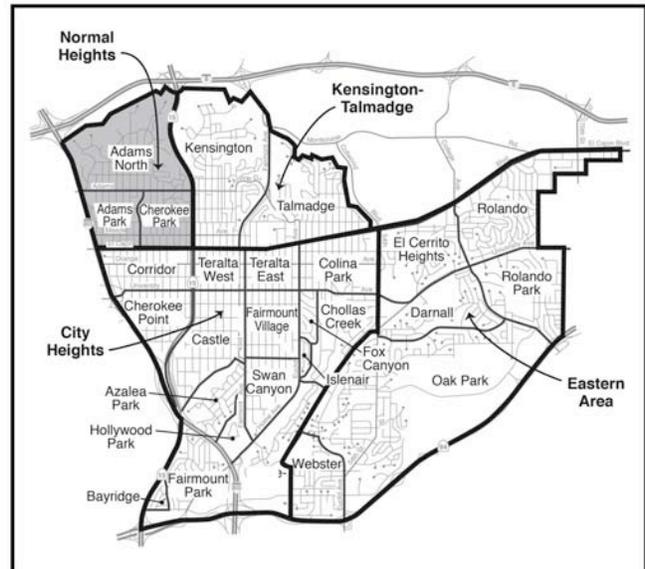
Some neighborhoods have developed their own action plans to address neighborhood concerns, in some cases looking at long range planning issues and others focusing also on short-term physical and social needs. More such action plans—or RAPs (Revitalization Action Plans)—are anticipated in the future.

Figure 5  
Mid-City Neighborhoods



## NORMAL HEIGHTS

Normal Heights was named for the San Diego Normal School, a teacher's college that was the forerunner to San Diego State University. A major early influence on the community was Bertram J. Carteri, who arrived in 1916 and began to build single-family bungalows. With the restoration of the trolley line in the early 1920s, Carteri began to build what is now known as the Carteri Center on Adams Avenue between 33<sup>rd</sup> and 34<sup>th</sup> Streets, which has been declared a potential historic district. The most significant structure is the Louis L. Gill designed bungalow court first named El Sueño, now known as Santa Rosa Court.



### POPULATION AND HOUSING PROFILE 1990 CENSUS

	Normal Heights	San Diego
Population	15,575	1,110,549
Single Dwelling Units	39%	56%
Multiple Dwelling Units	60%	42%
Household Size	2.08	2.6
Owner Occupied Dwellings	24%	48%
Households Below Poverty	19%	13%

### Adams North

Mountain View is best characterized by the steep slopes of Mission Valley along its northern boundary and the Adams Avenue business district at its southern edge. Single-family homes near the valley rim give way to duplex development and apartments near Adams Avenue. This area was the subject of an urban design plan after the 1985 fire.

### Adams Park and Cherokee Park

These neighborhoods are bounded by the commercial development of Adams Avenue on the north and El Cajon Boulevard on the south. Both neighborhoods have a mixture of single-family, older apartment courts, with larger apartment development scattered throughout the area. Activity in Adams Park includes the recent and anticipated expansion of Adams

Elementary School and park. Cherokee Park is planning improvements in conjunction with the construction of SR-15, including the construction of the 39<sup>th</sup> Street Park at Adams Avenue.

### **Normal Heights Issues**

- Public facilities are seriously deficient.
- Adams School is seriously overcrowded.
- The community is deficient in the number of parks and park space needed.
- There is no library in this community.
- The construction of SR-15 has presented problems to address, such as noise, visual impact, and traffic circulation. Opportunities are also presented, such as for new parks, freeway and transit access, and a new “Mid-City Center” at the SR-15 and El Cajon Boulevard interchange.
- Some residential properties are deteriorating and commercial properties need further revitalization.
- Speeding and cut-through traffic is disrupting residential neighborhoods.
- Commercial parking is deficient with on-street parking overflowing into the neighborhoods.
- The Mission Valley slopes are both an asset to be preserved in their natural passive state, and a potential fire hazard.
- Water and sewer lines are deteriorating.
- Street trees and streetlights are inadequate.
- Sidewalks, curbs, and gutters are in need of repair.
- A combined pedestrian and bicycle linkage over SR-15 at Monroe Street is needed, with a minimum 12-foot width.

Figure 6  
Normal Heights Community Vision Map

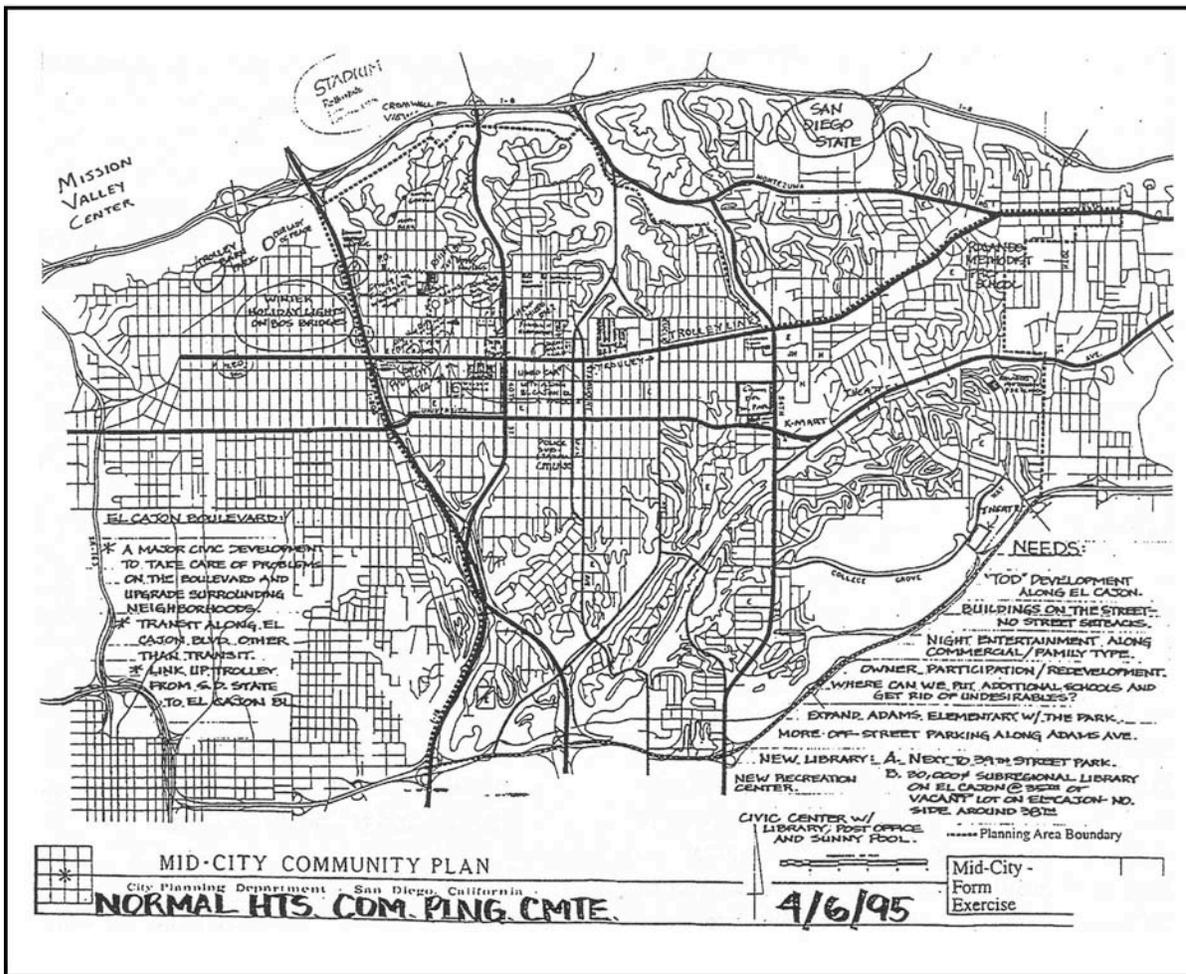
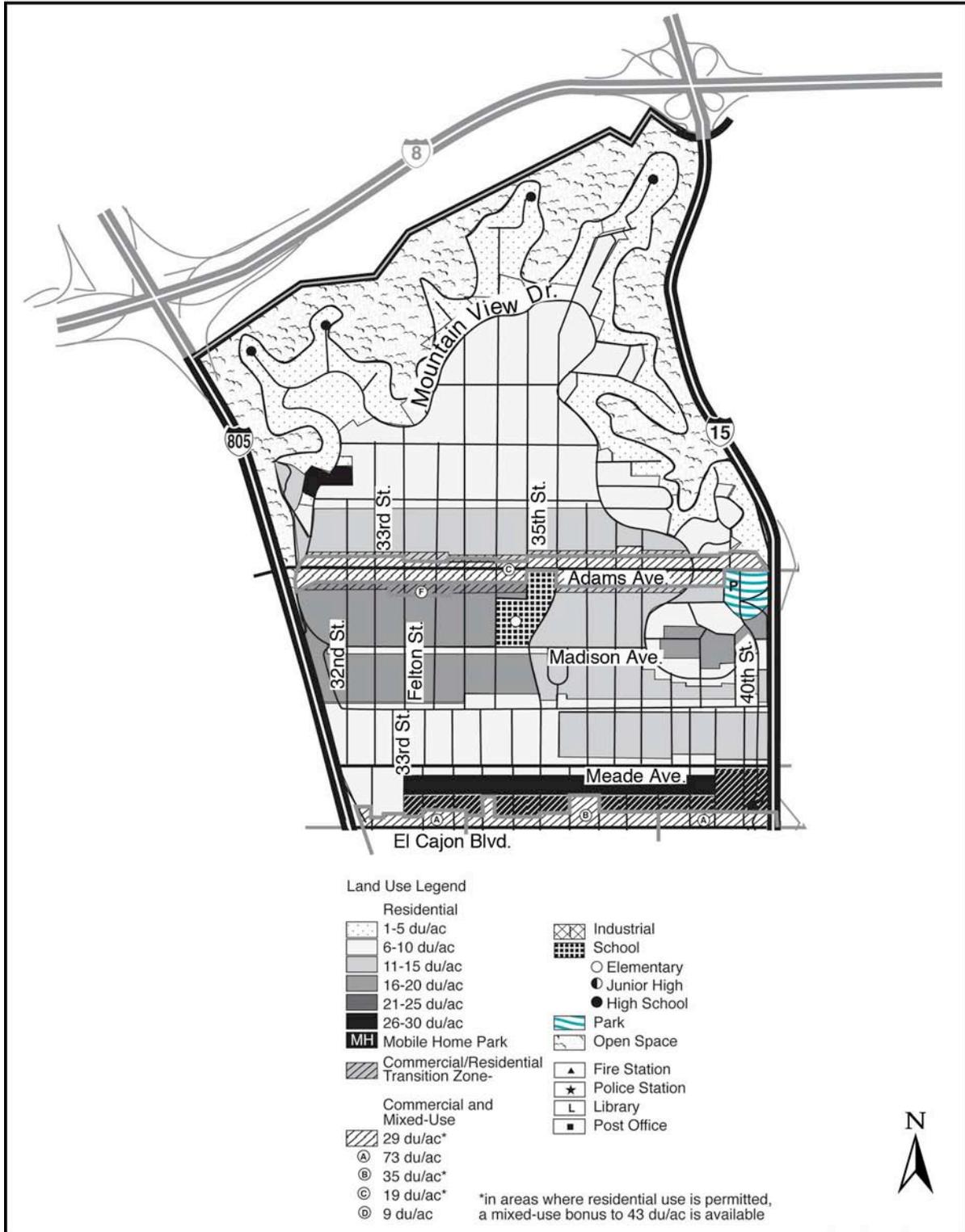


Figure 7  
**Normal Heights Community Plan Map**

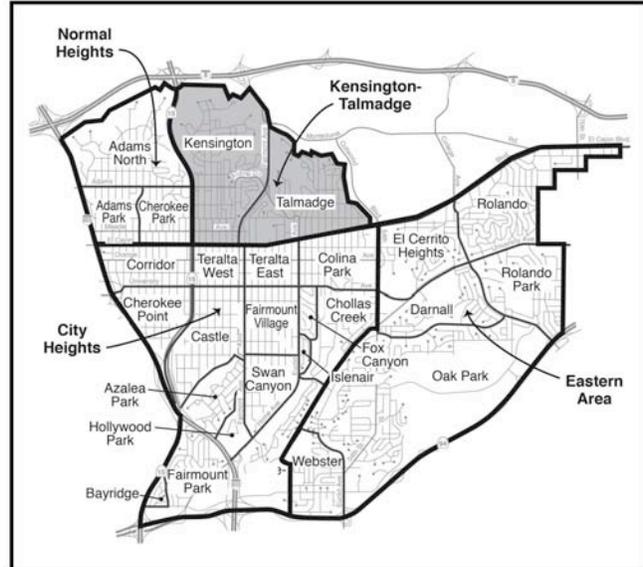


# KENSINGTON-TALMADGE

## Kensington

Kensington is a unique neighborhood due to its geography and the non-standard layout designed by its developers. Because it is a narrow peninsula isolated on three sides by steep slopes, much of which is dedicated open space, it has the ambience of a small town. Its winding streets contain mostly owner occupied, custom single-family homes. Kensington extends north, along tree-lined streets to the southern rim of Mission Valley.

Kensington has a small business district consisting of five blocks on Adams Avenue. Its central feature is the compact Kensington Park on which is centered the public library, considered the heart of the community.



Named for a borough in London, England, Kensington is a pioneering subdivision dating to 1910. With its stone gateways, ornamental lighting, and curving streets, the neighborhood is a strong candidate for designation as a historic district.

### POPULATION AND HOUSING PROFILE 1990 CENSUS

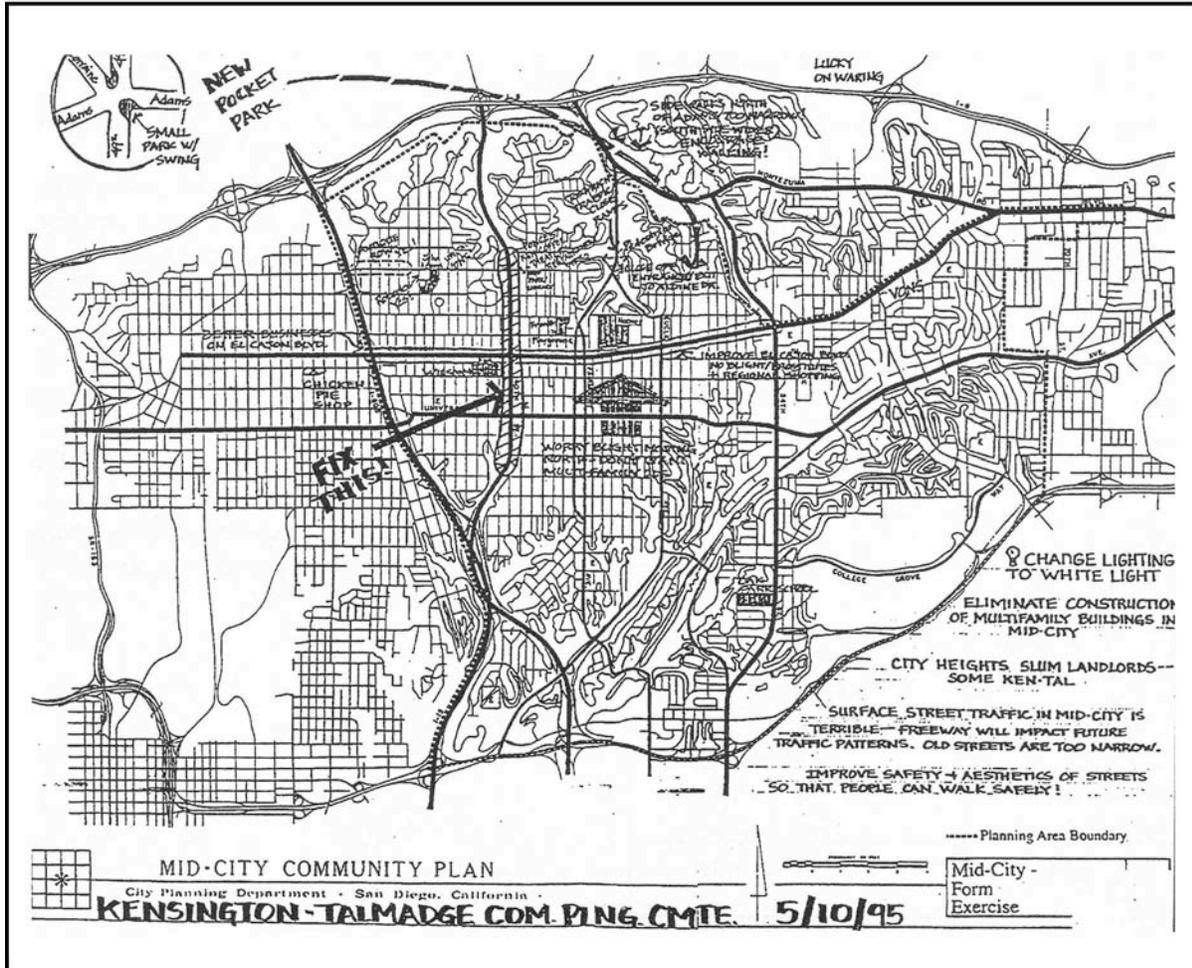
	Kensington-Talmadge	San Diego
Population	13,120	1,110,549
Single Dwelling Units	57%	56%
Multiple Dwelling Units	42%	42%
Household Size	2.13	2.6
Owner Occupied Dwellings	46%	48%
Households Below Poverty	14%	13%

## Talmadge

Talmadge is a special hidden neighborhood, the cousin of Kensington and surrounded by beautiful canyons. Iron gates with ornamental lights mark the gateways of Talmadge. Known as the “Movie Girl” tract, some of the streets are named after the Talmadge sisters, famous silent screen movie stars who dedicated the neighborhood in January 1926.

The homes are all unique and all with a distinctive individuality acquired over generations of proud home ownership. Homes are located on narrow streets with the garages placed at the rear of the lot or off alleys. This creates a wonderful pedestrian-oriented community where everyone walks and knows their neighbors.

**Figure 8**  
**Kensington-Talmadge Vision Map**

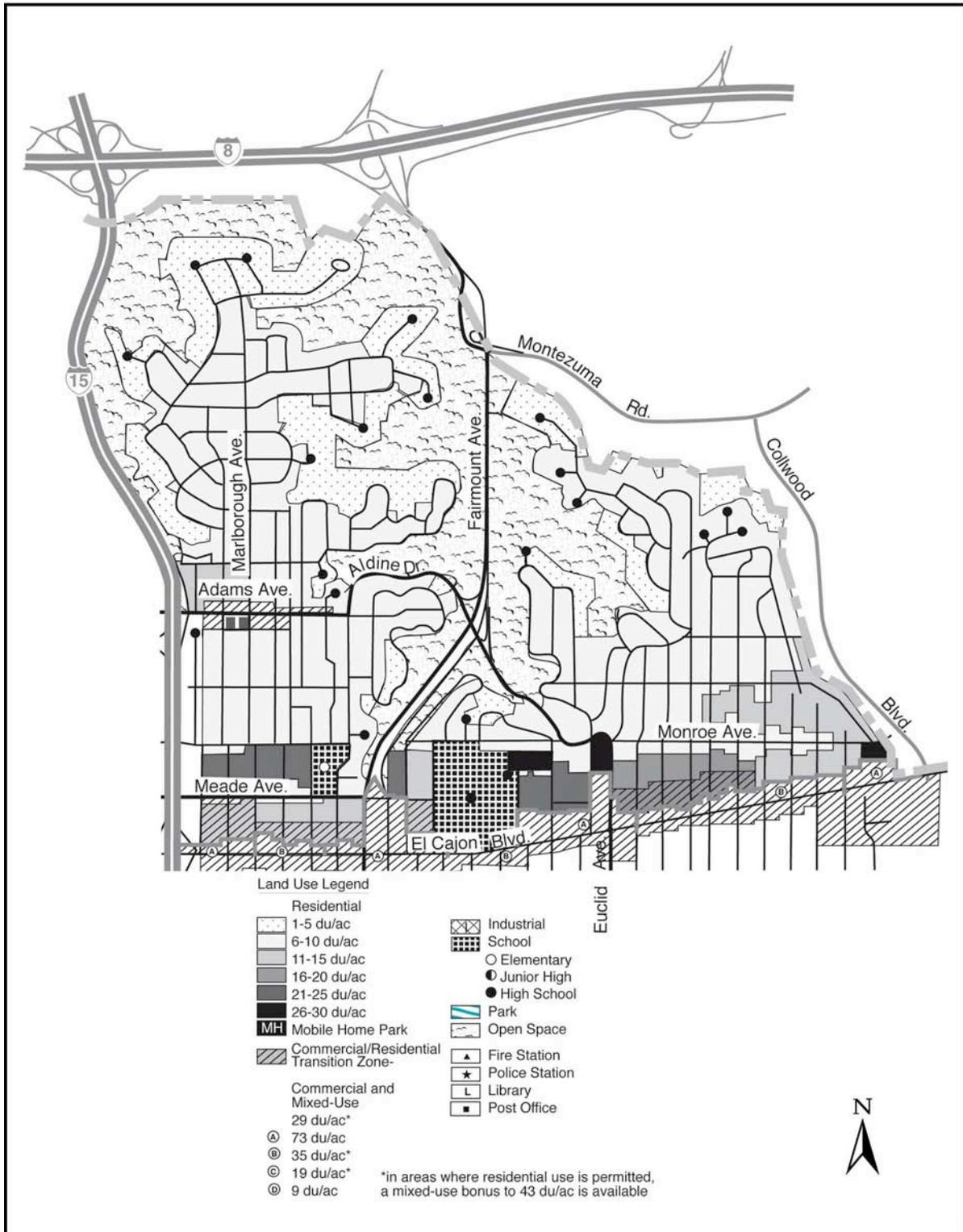


### KENSINGTON-TALMADGE ISSUES

- Schools are overcrowded and park space is deficient.
- The library does not meet General Plan standards but maintenance of the existing library site and the surrounding park is preferred.
- The construction of SR-15 has presented both problems to address, such as noise, visual impact, and traffic circulation; and opportunities, such as developing new parking areas, freeway and transit access, and a new “Mid-City Center” at the SR-15 and El Cajon Boulevard interchange.

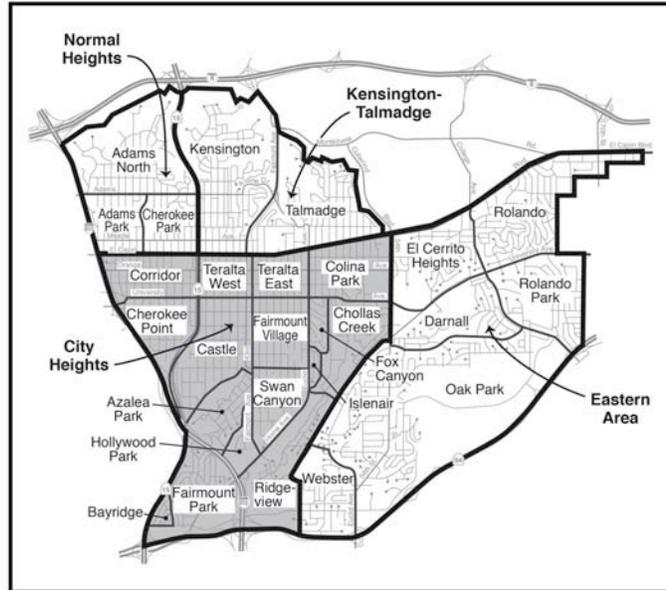
- Some residential properties south of Monroe Avenue are deteriorating, and commercial properties on El Cajon Boulevard are in need of revitalization.
- Speeding and cut-through traffic is disrupting portions of residential neighborhood streets.
- Commercial parking is deficient with on-street parking overflowing into the neighborhoods.
- The slopes surrounding Kensington-Talmadge are both an asset to be preserved in their natural passive state without intrusion, and a potential fire hazard.
- Sidewalks and water and sewer lines are deteriorated.
- Street trees and streetlights are inadequate.

Figure 9  
**Kensington-Talmadge Community Plan Map**



## CITY HEIGHTS

City Heights is located in the central Mid-City plateau, and is indented by a number of smaller canyons. The major canyon systems that once existed have been replaced by North/South freeways (I-805, SR-15). The community's southern boundary is State Route 94 (SR-94) freeway. The Chollas Creek is located in the southern reaches of the community.



Within City Heights there are a number of neighborhoods, all having their own unique identities, ranging from the very urban higher-density, to low-density, somewhat rural character with small single-family bungalows.

In the past few years, neighbors have joined together to work towards their neighborhoods' "renaissance" with a great deal of success. Their first objective has been addressing public and personal safety issues, successfully turning the tide of crime.

An outgrowth of a City Heights Economic and Crime summit in 1994, a Revitalization Action Plan (RAP) has been completed for City Heights, making specific recommendations for short-term and long-term actions. These recommendations look at a full range of social, economic, and facility needs.

### POPULATION AND HOUSING PROFILE 1990 CENSUS

	City Heights	San Diego
Population	70,064	1,110,549
Single Dwelling Units	41%	56%
Multiple Dwelling Units	58%	42%
Household Size	2.94	2.6
Owner Occupied Dwellings	23%	48%
Households Below Poverty	30%	13%

### The Corridor, Teralta West, and Teralta East

The Corridor, Teralta West, and Teralta East are linear neighborhoods located in the middle strip of the Mid-City plateau. They were originally developed with single-family housing as

the suburban addition to San Diego, and located along the east trolley corridor and the original Highway 80 (El Cajon Boulevard) route. The area has been developing since World War II with higher-density apartments and condominium development.

These neighborhoods now contain the highest population density in Mid-City. Much of the housing is multifamily combined with older single-family development and some older apartment courts, which are still the best maintained areas.

Commercial needs are served by The Boulevard and University Avenue commercial corridors. All residences are within a walking radius of commercial services and potential employment areas.

### **Colina Park**

Colina Park is located just east of Teralta East. The neighborhood's single-family residential areas have been encroached upon by large lower income apartment complexes. It is distinguished by hilly terrain, giving the area outstanding views. A large community park—Colina Del Sol Park—includes Colina Park Golf Course, a recently rejuvenated par 3 course that features a very successful Pro Kids Golf Academy for local youth.

### **Cherokee Point**

With the exception of the University Avenue commercial frontage, Cherokee Point is a residential neighborhood, with primarily single-family homes. Park de La Cruz is being developed as part of the SR-15 construction. Remnant hillsides indent the neighborhood from the freeways which have replaced some of the natural canyon areas.

### **Castle**

Castle is primarily a single-family home residential neighborhood with the exception of the University Avenue commercial frontage and a few older stores scattered along Fairmount Avenue. Some multifamily development is located along 43<sup>rd</sup> Street and Fairmount Avenue. The northern rim of Azalea Canyon bounds the residential neighborhood, providing a potential resource for open space and recreation enhancements.

### **Azalea Park and Hollywood Park**

Azalea Park is a primarily single-family residential home neighborhood with a few sprinkled low-density multifamily complexes. Poplar Avenue bisects Azalea Park and provides some neighborhood commercial services to the area. Azalea Park is one of the most active residential neighborhoods in City Heights and one of the first in the City of San Diego to implement the neighborhood policing program. Local craftsmen and artists have created unique wood crafted street signs representing the flower names of many of the streets in the neighborhood. The neighborhood of Hollywood Park is bound to the south by Hollywood Park and Canyon.

On December 13 and 14, 1996, the Azalea Park neighborhood Association co-sponsored a "Village Charrette" with Hollywood Park neighborhood, to identify neighborhood

improvements for revitalization. The vision reached during the event was: the establishment of a “Village in a Park” creating cohesion and place for the two neighborhoods; using the canyon open space and existing Azalea Park and Hollywood Park as a resource to attract business and shops; and the establishment of gateway entrances featuring artwork. Along with these ideas would go improvement of public infrastructure and services, amendments to zoning to permit “live work” artist and commercial space, improved parking and development of a unique village design.

### **Fairmount Park and Bayridge**

Fairmount Park is located in a promontory surrounded on all sides by hillsides and freeways. Home Avenue bisects it diagonally, linking the neighborhood to both I-805 and SR-94. Chollas Creek runs through it on a southwestern direction towards San Diego Bay. The neighborhood is predominantly single-family homes, with some auto-oriented commercial and industrial uses along Home Avenue. Bayridge is a small neighborhood contained within Fairmount Park on its westernmost knoll, identifiable for its outstanding views and well maintained duplex development.

### **Fairmount Village and Swan Canyon**

Fairmount Village is located on the mesa south of University Avenue and east of Fairmount Avenue. The area is predominantly single-family homes, with some duplex development and apartment development predominantly near University Avenue. Commercial development is concentrated along University with scattered businesses on Fairmount Avenue and Euclid Avenue. The recent development of the City Links Project, along with the Rosa Parks Elementary School, have brought new life into Fairmount Village. Swan Canyon, located south of Fairmount Village, is predominantly single-family uphill from canyons facing Home Avenue. Monroe-Clarke Middle School was recently constructed in this neighborhood.

### **Islenair**

Islenair is an isolated neighborhood just east of Euclid Avenue and bounded on all other sides by hillside remnants of canyons. It is also an island in the sense that it is entirely single-family homes in an otherwise mixed-use area; a very small and tightly knit community.

### **Ridgeview**

The northern portion of Ridgeview is predominantly single-family residential, with the southern section dedicated to industrial use. Chollas Creek runs through it in a southwesterly direction.

### **Chollas Creek and Fox Canyon**

Chollas Creek is predominantly single-family homes with some multifamily development in areas off University Avenue. The Fox Canyon neighborhood has developed as its vision a well-integrated residential and business community sensitive to preserving natural, artistic, and historical developments within a well maintained, safe, and friendly environment.

## City Heights Issues

- In spite of the addition of new facilities, schools remain severely overcrowded and parks are deficient.
- While presenting some problems, the construction of SR-15 presents the opportunity for new business development surrounding the University Avenue interchange.
- The very high demand for public transit outstrips the available service.
- Residential rehabilitation and commercial revitalization are needed.
- Commercial parking is deficient with on-street parking overflowing into the neighborhoods.
- Sidewalks and water and sewer lines are deteriorated.
- Street trees are lacking.
- The social and cultural needs of the culturally diverse sectors of the population need to be addressed.

Figure 10  
City Heights Vision Map

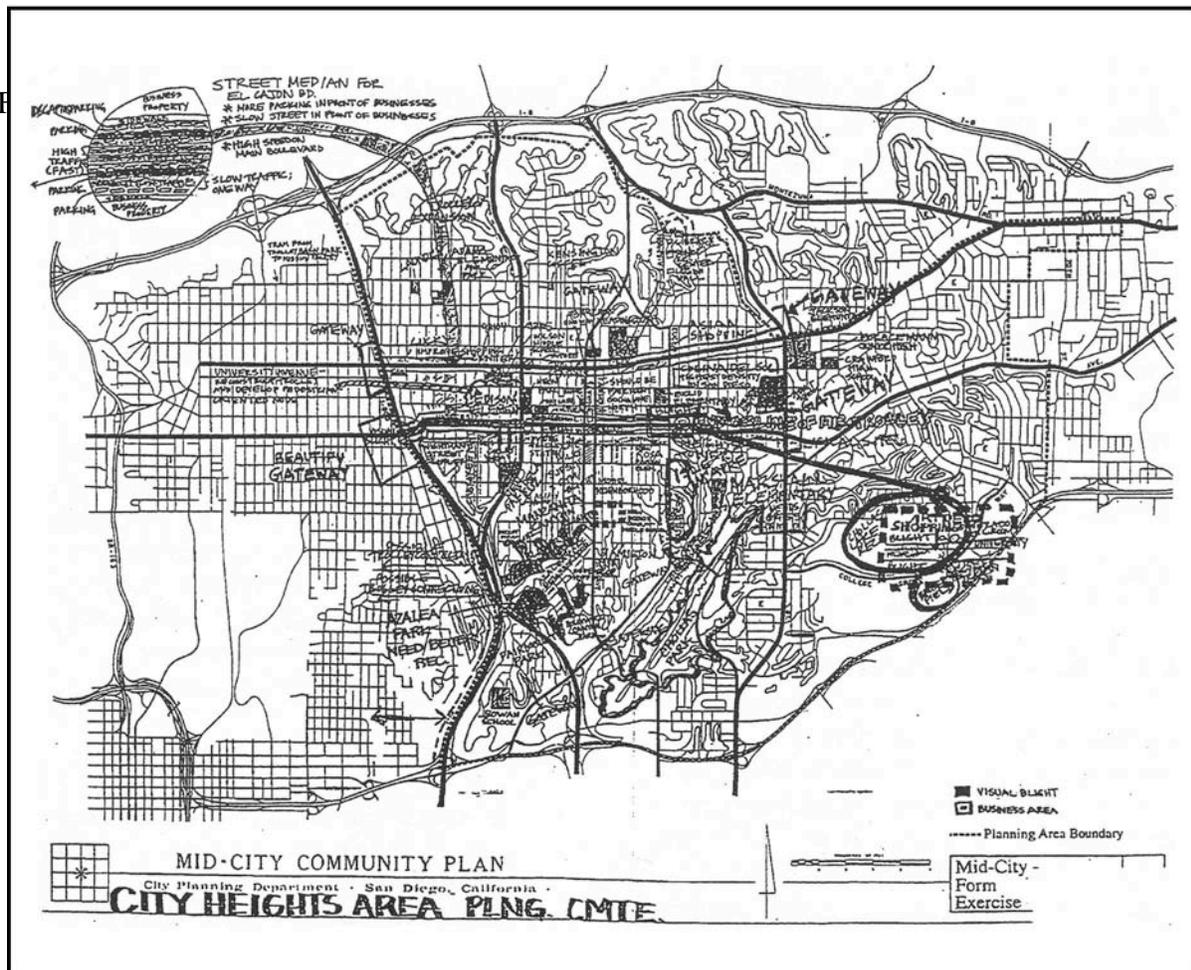
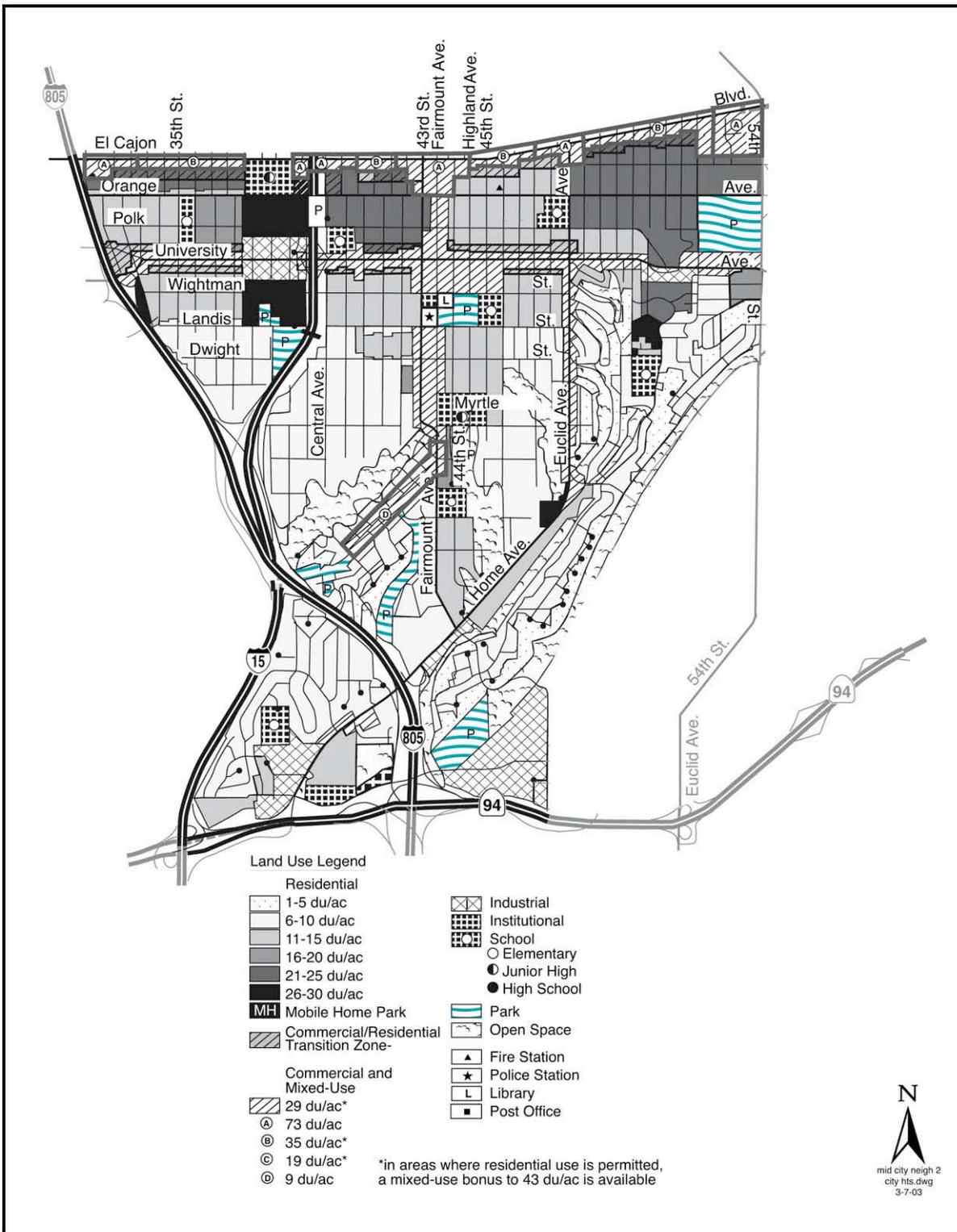


Figure 11  
City Heights Community Plan Map



## EASTERN AREA

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While the Eastern Area shares many of the same issues with Mid-City's other three communities, it is distinguished by its hilly topography and more recent development. But in spite of its age, this area finds itself in need of revitalization as well. In a recent effort to address these needs, most of this subarea along with the College area and portions of City Heights was the subject of the College and Eastern Area Planning and Economic Review (CEAPER), which recommended a series of strategies aimed at attracting business and residents.

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### POPULATION AND HOUSING PROFILE 1990 CENSUS

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	Eastern Area	San Diego
Population	29,176	1,110,549
Single Dwelling Units	59%	56%
Multiple Dwelling Units	38%	42%
Household Size	2.50	2.6
Owner Occupied Dwellings	54%	48%
Households Below Poverty	18%	13%

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### El Cerrito Heights

As its name describes, El Cerrito Heights is a hilly neighborhood. El Cerrito Heights is a predominantly single-family homes neighborhood with some multifamily development off the commercial corridors of El Cajon Boulevard and University Avenue. The 54<sup>th</sup> street corridor contains a substantial acreage of schools with Jackson Elementary, Mann Middle School, and Crawford Senior High School. There is a Jewish Community Center with recreational and meeting facilities, and a convalescent home. A small hospital, Villa View, is located on a knoll overlooking University Avenue and 54<sup>th</sup> Street.

### Rolando

The rolling hills of Rolando began to develop in the 1930s, as evidenced by the style of the custom single-family homes and the “acorn” style post-top streetlights. The grid street pattern south of the strip commercial development along El Cajon Boulevard gives way to a curvilinear pattern in the hilly southern portions of the neighborhood. While predominantly single-family, some pockets of multifamily development are found adjacent to El Cajon Boulevard. San Diego State University strongly influences commercial uses in this area.

### Rolando Park

Rolando Park is one of the more recently developed neighborhoods of Mid-City, beginning development in the 1950s with predominantly tract housing. Rolando Park shares Rolando's

hilly environment and the commercial services along University Avenue. Open space hillsides largely separate University Avenue from the single-family homes, with only a small pocket of multifamily development along College Avenue.

### **Darnall, Oak Park and Webster**

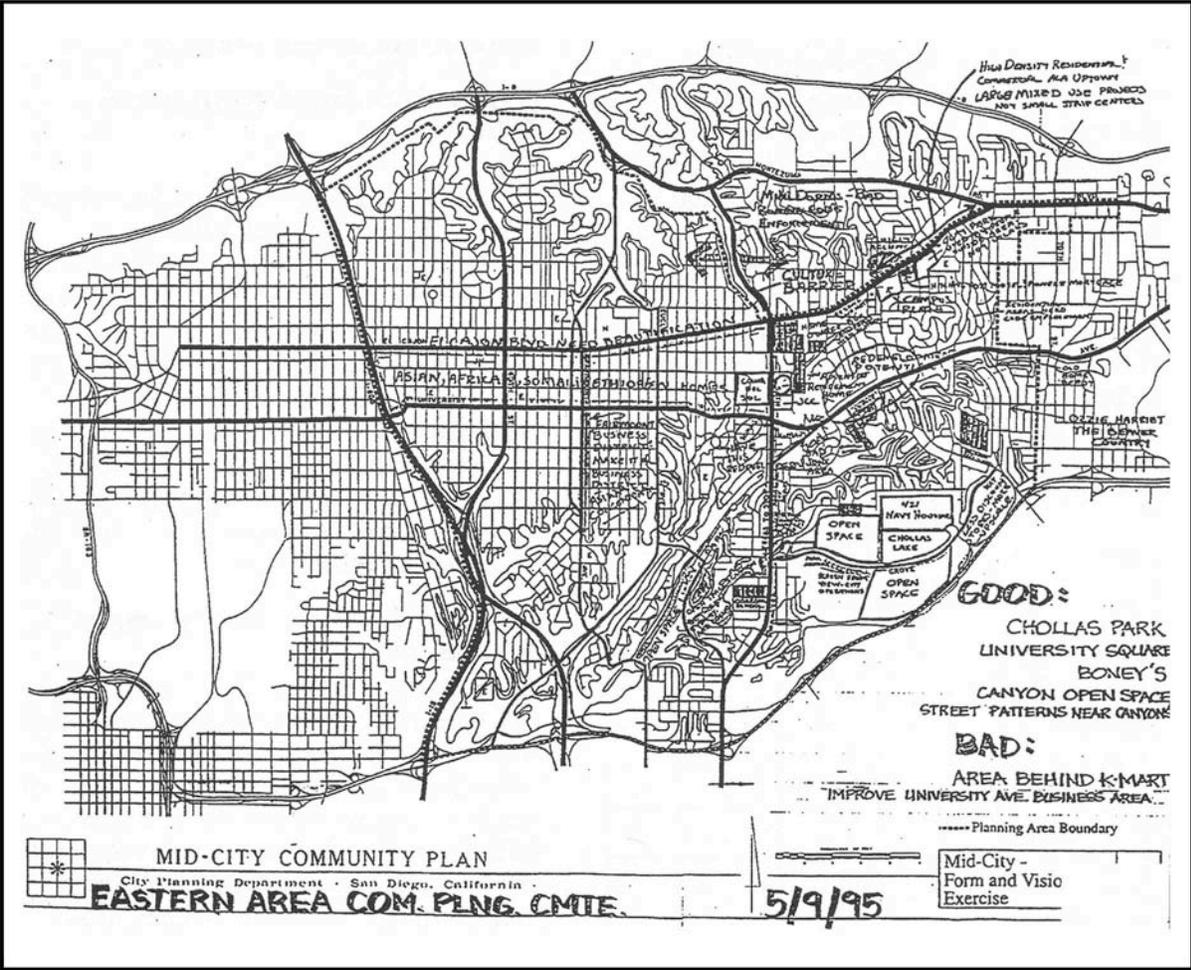
These neighborhoods are of recent development in predominantly single-family homes, but also include some large multifamily complexes and a mobile home park in both Oak Park and Webster. Scattered commercial development is found along University Avenue, College Avenue, 54<sup>th</sup> Street, Euclid Avenue, and Federal Boulevard. Oak Park is home to Chollas Lake Park, with plans in the works for significant expansion as a resource-based park.

The area of Streamview Drive, located in a canyon which is the boundary between Darnall and Oak Park, is currently the subject of a revitalization study.

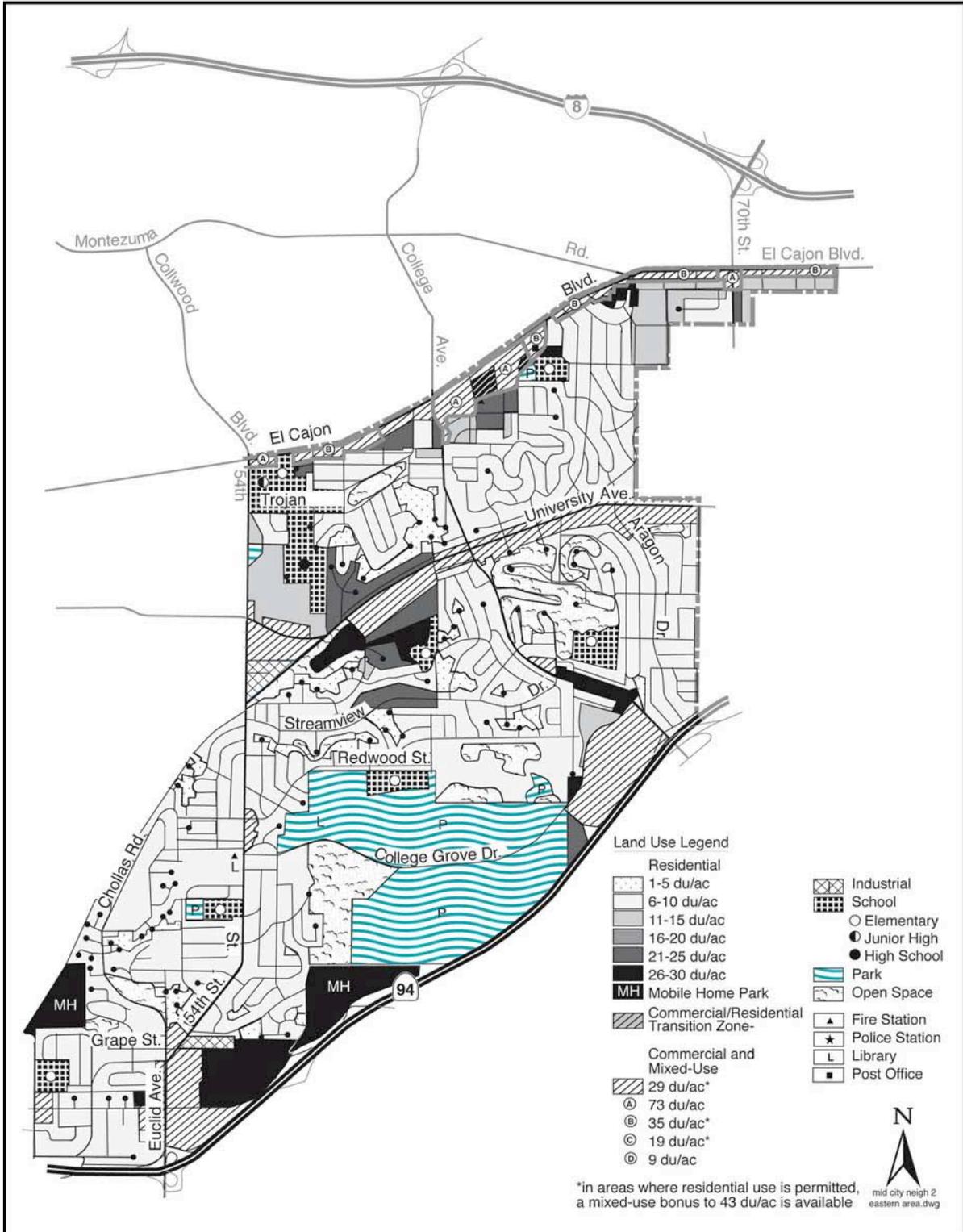
### **Eastern Area Issues**

- Most schools are overcrowded, some seriously.
- Commercial revitalization is needed, in the area surrounding 54<sup>th</sup> Street and Federal Boulevard, and the Marketplace at the Grove regional center on College Avenue.
- Residential deterioration is spreading.
- Traffic, parking, and structural deterioration along Streamview Drive need to be addressed.

Figure 12  
 Eastern Area Vision Map



**Figure 13**  
**Eastern Area Community Plan Map**



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## **IV-B NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES ELEMENT**

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Although considered an urban environment, the Greater Mid-City area has many natural features that contribute to the quality of the area. These include open space resources such as canyons and floodplains, as well as historic and prehistoric resources. Visual resources too, contribute to the urban environment including panoramic views of San Diego's mountains and coastline. Preservation of the quality of the environment is important to residents of the area as is respecting geological constraints associated with the natural environment.

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**Geotechnical Conditions**

**Environmental Quality**

**Open Space**

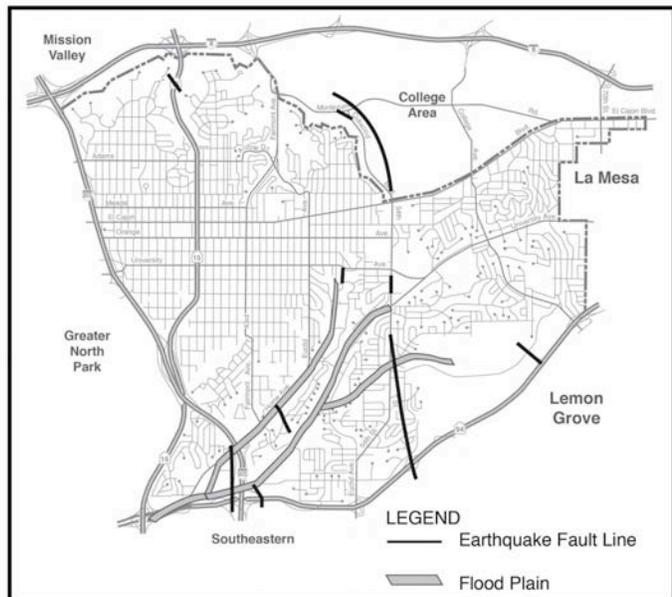
**Visual Resources**

**Cultural Resources**

## GEOTECHNICAL CONDITIONS

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Although urbanized, the Greater Mid-City area possesses geotechnical conditions which represent potential safety hazards. These include expansive soils and areas of potential liquefaction and landslide. In addition, the La Nacion and lesser faults exist in the community and represent a potential geotechnical hazard in the event of earthquake.



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**Vision:** Development which avoids or mitigates potential geotechnical hazards.

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## FAULTS AND LIQUEFACTION

### Goals

- Consider the use of fault areas as linear open space areas or linkages to open space resources.
- Minimize development in areas prone to liquefaction. Ensure adequate building measures when development of liquefaction areas is unavoidable.

### Recommendations

- Provide an adequate building setback from all known faults.
- Utilize development controls, dedications and easements to minimize potential earthquake hazards to private property.
- Utilize appropriate building techniques and site planning in areas of known geotechnical hazard.

## **SOIL STRUCTURE, LANDSLIDES, SHRINK AND SWELL CHARACTERISTICS**

### **Goal**

- Avoid building construction in areas with inadequate soil conditions.

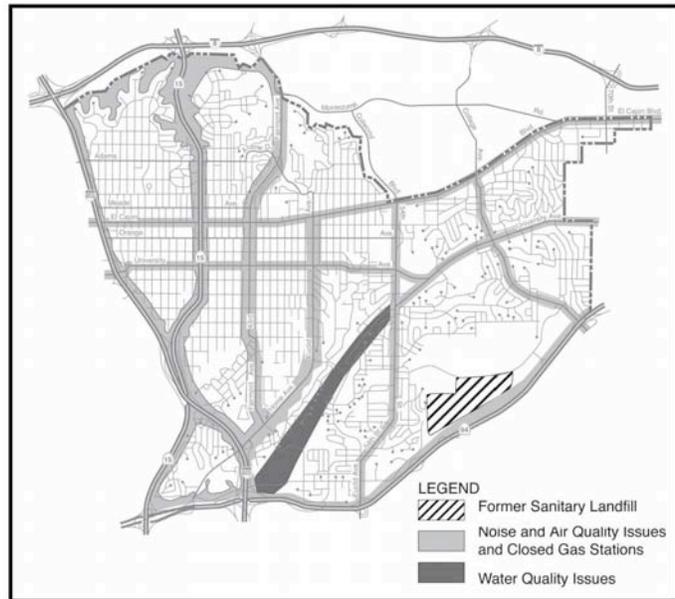
### **Recommendations**

- Utilize appropriate building techniques in areas of known geotechnical hazard.
- Cluster building construction in areas not affected by geotechnical hazard conditions.

## ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

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Myriad issues affect the environmental quality of the Greater Mid-City area. Biological resources, air, and water quality are threatened by development and motorized vehicle emissions. Former sanitary landfills and closed service stations in Mid-City can bring hazardous materials in close proximity to residents.



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**Vision:** A community where natural resources are preserved and development contributes to the environmental quality of the area.

---

## BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

### Goals

- Protect canyon, hillside, and creek-side natural wildlife habitats from urban encroachment and conflicting uses.
- Improve and enhance riparian habitat in Chollas Creek (City Heights and Eastern Area).

### Recommendations

- Apply the appropriate development restrictions to riparian areas along Chollas Creek.
- Prepare and implement a master plan for the enhancement of Chollas Creek which protects natural wildlife and riparian habitat.
- Form “Friends of Mid-City Canyons” to focus funding and effort toward the maintenance and enhancement of Chollas Creek, and the area’s natural canyons.
- Apply appropriate zoning restrictions to all steep slopes in Mid-City to ensure that sensitive slopes and natural habitats are protected from erosion and other impacts of urban encroachment.

## **AIR QUALITY**

### **Goal**

- Improve air quality throughout Mid-City through local monitoring, awareness and the promotion of non-polluting forms of transportation.

### **Recommendations**

- Utilize public relations techniques and physical improvements to promote non-polluting pedestrian access and bicycling as primary intra-community modes of transportation.
- Pursue the expansion of trolley service both north-south and east-west to link the community to regional employment opportunities, as well as to link the community internally to provide less-polluting mass transportation options.

## **WATER QUALITY**

### **Goal**

- Improve and enhance riparian habitat in Chollas Creek as a means of improving water quality.

### **Recommendations**

- Form “Friends of Mid-City Canyons” to focus funding and effort toward the maintenance and enhancement of Chollas Creek.
- Encourage use of reclaimed water for landscaping and encourage low water demand landscaping.

## **HAZARDOUS MATERIALS AND SOIL QUALITY**

### **Goal**

- Clean up former landfill areas for public use.

### **Recommendations**

- Utilize grants, bonds or other public funding to clean-up “brownfields” and landfill areas and convert them to an appropriate use.
- Encourage use of reclaimed water for landscaping and encourage low water demand landscaping.
- Continue to provide locations for the safe disposal of hazardous materials within the community, using the fire stations as a possible resource for such facilities.
- Alternatives for the timely reclamation and reuse of the Chollas landfill should be identified.

## **NOISE**

### **Goal**

- Maintain adequate sound levels in residential neighborhoods.

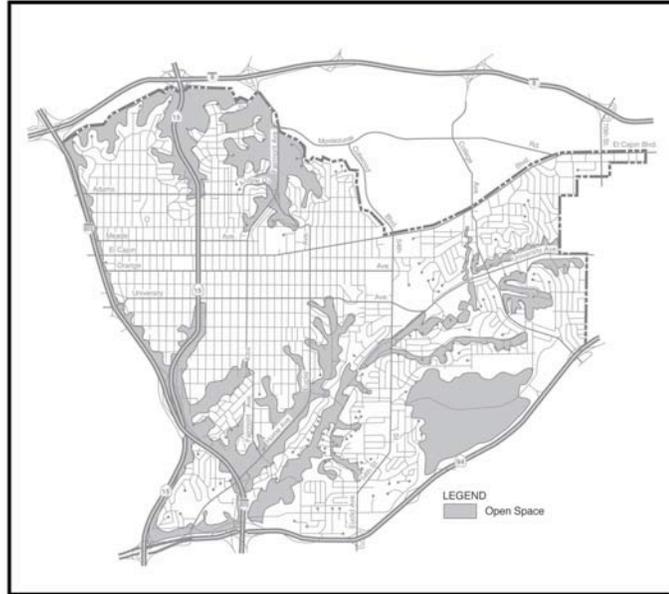
### **Recommendations**

- Mitigate sound pollution conditions created along major transportation corridors and certain businesses.
- Encourage the use of “noise masking” techniques when appropriate.

## OPEN SPACE

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With close to 6,000 acres, the central and western portions of the Mid-City Community occupy a relatively level, developed mesa bisected by a series of canyons, particularly along Chollas Creek and the southern rim of Mission Valley. Together with parks, trails and publicly owned lands, these canyons represent an open space resource for the community. The Eastern Area is urbanized on rolling hillsides, where large lot development enjoys its private views and open space, but where few interconnected open space areas exist.



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**Vision:** An integrated open space system of linked natural canyons, creeks, parks, trails and joint use areas.

---

## LAND FORM – CANYONS AND CREEKS

### Goals

- Permanently link and preserve all canyons, slopes and floodways, designated as such in this Plan, as open space.
- Develop passive recreational space in undeveloped canyons, where the natural integrity of the canyon can be preserved.
- Preserve sensitive hillside areas.
- Preserve areas of native vegetation.

### Chollas Creek

- Preserve and enhance Chollas Creek as a linear open space system to provide passive recreational opportunities, visual relief and biological habitat preservation.
- Where acquisition of Chollas Creek is not feasible, explore other means of preservation such as open space easements, development restrictions and other means.
- Develop a Master Plan for the enhancement of Chollas Creek as a passive linear park.

## **Recommendations**

- Preserve sensitive slopes, canyons, floodways and other areas designated as open space through acquisition, zoning, resource regulation or other available methods.
- Within areas zoned for single-family development and designated for open space preservation, limit further subdivisions and development to one dwelling unit per lot.
- When development occurs, obtain open space easements in privately owned canyon areas.
- Form “Friends of Mid-City Canyons” to focus funding and effort toward the preservation and maintenance of open space areas.

## **PARKS AND OPEN SPACE**

### **Goals**

- Protect biological, visual, and topographic resources.
- Ensure the preservation of an open space system through appropriate designation and protection.
- Give highest priority to the acquisition of open spaces susceptible to development.
- Provide access to usable public open space systems in order to increase passive recreational opportunities.

### **Recommendations**

- Paper streets or paper alleys should not be vacated if they are located in an open space canyon and the retention of undeveloped paper streets or alleys would assist in the preservation of the area as open space.
- Utilize easements and appropriate open space zoning to maintain and enlarge parks and open space.
- Revise and prioritize the City’s open space acquisition list, assigning highest priority to acquisition of the Chollas Creek open space system and other systems susceptible to development.
- Property acquired by the City for open space preservation should be officially dedicated for that purpose.
- Create a system of linkages between Mid-City parks and open space.

## **TRAILS**

### **Goals**

- Provide limited non-vehicular access to open space areas within the community.
- Enhance links between park and open space areas within and outside the community.

## **Recommendations**

- Limit trails within open space areas to those that provide designated linkages. Trails should be located to minimize impacts to sensitive slopes and vegetation. Security, fire risk, and maintenance should also be considered in the location of trails.
- Due to their environmental sensitivity and steepness, public access should be restricted along hillsides facing Mission Valley and within Kensington-Talmadge.
- Identify design concepts, routes, and funding for the development and maintenance of a non-vehicular trail system.
- Identify and improve key streets that link open space resources and community facilities.
- A ranger program should be established to ensure compliance with established park and open space policies.

## **JOINT USE AREAS**

### **Goal**

- Provide recreational facilities open to the community on all government owned lands (refer to **Public Facilities and Services Element** and **Urban Design Element**).

### **Recommendations**

- Joint use agreements between the City of San Diego and San Diego Unified School District should be adopted to make all public school sites available for recreational use and open space support.
- The City of San Diego should work with other governmental agencies to access possible use of other agency facilities for open space support.

## **OPEN SPACE DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES**

While some of the open space described in the Public Domain section of this element has been acquired for preservation or has an open space easement placed on it, a significant portion remains under private control. These areas are typically the lower portions of hillside lots with a single-family dwelling on the upper portion of the lot, although some vacant lots still remain. The potential exists in some areas for additional development to disturb this open space.

### **Recommendations**

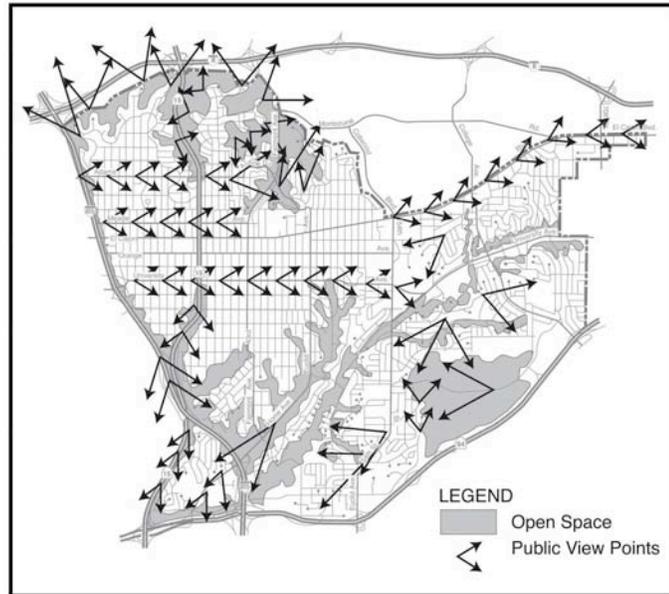
- Within residentially designated areas, apply open space zones (ten-acre minimum) to all properties containing slopes of 25 percent or greater.
- A maximum of one dwelling unit per lot should be permitted.
- Establish building setback and landscaping requirements for properties along the edge of designated open space hillsides. Such a restriction would protect slopes from erosion and



## VISUAL RESOURCES

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Several streets and other public areas offer framed public views of panoramic aesthetic features such as open space areas or significant architecture. In addition, many of the streets on the Mid-City mesa top afford panoramic views of the mountains to the east and the bay and coastline to the west and south.



---

**Vision:** Development that preserves and enhances significant views within and outside the greater Mid-City area.

---

## VIEWS

### Goals

- Ensure that new development preserves and enhances framed public views of existing aesthetic resources such as parks and community landmarks.
- Preserve and enhance panoramic public views of the bay, open spaces, and mountains from street rights-of-way and other public areas.

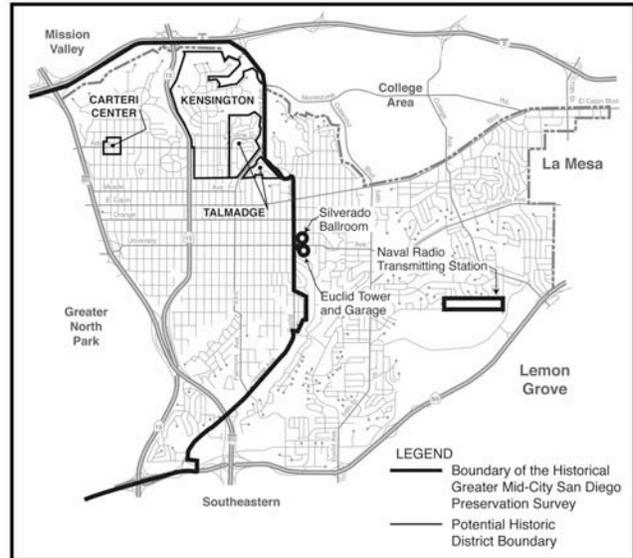
### Recommendations

- Review development proposals to protect and preserve significant framed and panoramic public views within the community.
- Undertake a study to identify key sites with significant panoramic public views for potential acquisition as public viewing areas.
- Preserve and enhance privately owned local landmarks offering framed views from public vantage points.
- Work with the City to identify sites with significant panoramic public views for potential public acquisition.
- Continue undergrounding utilities on view corridors.

## CULTURAL RESOURCES

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Evidence of prehistoric occupation exists within Mid-City, primarily within or adjacent to Chollas Creek. In addition, there are several historic structures and districts which are eligible for historic designation, including the Carteri Center Historic District in Normal Heights, the Kensington & Talmadge Historic District in Kensington, and the Egyptian Revival Euclid Tower, Garage, and Silverado Ballroom in City Heights. In addition, the Chollas Heights Navy housing project in the Eastern Area includes a museum and historic district with structures from a 1917 era Naval Radio Transmitting Station. Numerous other structures remain from the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century which, although they do not qualify for historic designation, contribute to the character of Mid-City's neighborhoods.



---

**Vision:** A community where prehistoric and historic resources are celebrated, preserved, and enhanced.

---

## ARCHAEOLOGIC AND PALEONTOLOGIC RESOURCES

### Goal

- Preserve areas of Mid-City possessing significant archaeologic and paleontologic interest.

### Recommendation

- Identify and preserve significant prehistoric sites through zoning, development review or other regulatory means.

## HISTORIC SITES AND DISTRICTS

### Goals

- Preserve and upgrade all land and structures having significant historical interest.
- Preserve and enhance historic resources by means of acquisition, easements, agreements, assessment districts or other means.
- Preserve and enhance areas identified as historic districts.

- Encourage the retention and enhancement of non-historic structures which contribute to the character of Mid-City.

### **Recommendations**

- Encourage the preservation of historic structures through identification, designation, tax relief, tax breaks and other neighborhood physical improvement and financing measures.
- Apply zoning that will act to conserve older areas of Mid-City which, although they are not historic, contain structures contributing to the overall character of the area.
- Expand the Greater Mid-City Historic Oversight Program to encourage and ensure the identification and designation of all eligible historic sites and districts in Mid-City to implement the 1987 Historical Greater Mid-City San Diego Preservation Strategy that surveyed that portion of the Mid-City communities west of Euclid Avenue and Home Avenue.
- Private owners of historic structures and those with property in historic districts are responsible for maintaining and enhancing their structures, in partnership with the community and the City.
- Economic incentives such as the Mills Act tax incentive should be identified and developed to assist property owners to maintain historic properties.
- Coordinate the continued evaluation and designation of historic resources within Mid-City.

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## **IV-C URBAN DESIGN ELEMENT**

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Mid-City has an outstanding urban design character with its remaining natural canyons; public views to Mission Valley, downtown, and San Diego Bay; and its walkable neighborhoods; all within easy walking distance to a school or shopping area. Urban design should strive to maintain and provide much needed awareness and enhancement to these community features.

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### **Open Space and Parks**

### **The Great Streets of Mid-City**

### **Gateways and Crossroads**

### **Other Neighborhood Links**

### **Civic Spaces and Buildings**

### **Traffic Calming for Neighborhood Streets**

## BACKGROUND

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The western neighborhoods of Mid-City are located on a large central mesa indented by a number of inner City canyons and small creeks. Growing out of the central business district and facilitated by the introduction of streetcar service, these neighborhoods developed during the first half of the century. The varied topography and changing real estate market of the post war years are reflected in the curvilinear street system, cul-de-sacs, and auto-oriented shopping centers of the neighborhoods generally east of Euclid Avenue and south of Home Avenue and I-805.

The character of Mid-City has also been significantly affected by the construction of a number of freeways that crisscross the central mesa, isolating many Mid-City neighborhoods.

Mid-City's 132,466 residents live in 24 neighborhoods of distinctive character and amenities. Over the last several decades of rapid suburbanization, Mid-City, like other urbanized areas, has not enjoyed sustained public investment in infrastructure. Sustained efforts on the part of the City Council to reinvest in urban San Diego need to be strengthened to overcome the existing deficiencies and once again make Mid-City a most desirable community in which to live and invest.

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**Vision:** A community that is more desirable than suburbia as a place to be in, raise families, invest, work, and do business.

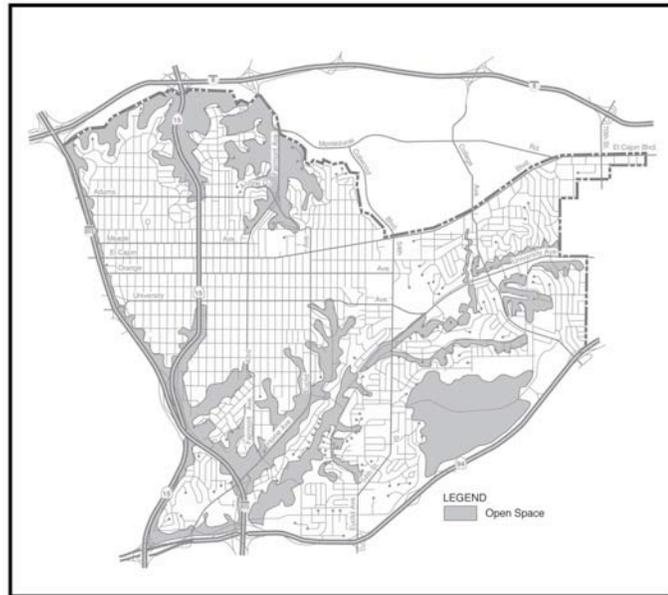
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This **Urban Design Element** addresses the public realm—the area that is owned in common by the citizens. Such lands are commonly administered by government or other public agencies. The public domain includes open space, parks, public buildings, joint use properties, streets and any other property or facility owned or controlled by a public agency. The guidelines that follow are intended to be implemented through public projects.

## OPEN SPACE AND PARKS

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Mid-City is bounded to the north by steep hillsides that rim Mission Valley. A coastal plain, extending from the San Diego Bayfront foothills, it rises slowly and extends inland several miles. This coastal plain is indented by smaller canyons and a large creek which once upon a time linked the Mid-City plains to San Diego Bay itself. The Open Space section of the Natural and Cultural Resources Element includes City-owned hillsides, wetlands and regional resource based park areas.



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**Vision:** An interconnected system of improved parks and natural hillsides, canyons and wetlands.

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Hillsides and canyons help to define the form of the Mid-City communities. Even after a century of development and urbanization, much of the original landform is identifiable. Particularly significant hillside and canyon areas include those slopes framing the southern face of Mission Valley, Talmadge Canyon, Fairmount Canyon, Chollas Creek and a number of smaller Mid-City canyons such as Manzanita, Swan, Hollywood and other canyons.

### Goal

- To recognize and enhance the influence these significant landforms have on urban form and function.

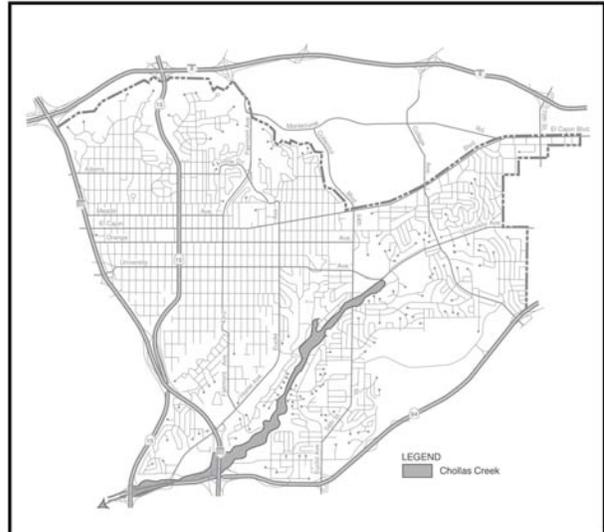
### Recommendations

- Revegetate natural hillsides with native or naturalized plant material according to the performance standards found in the Landscape Technical Manual.
- Develop nature trails and interpretive programs that all residents, young and old, can use and refer to as they walk and enjoy the trails.
- Develop small view areas along the rim, where people can sit and enjoy the native landscape and take advantage of the excellent panoramic and framed views.

- Design open space signage and safety fencing in a manner that is visually compatible with, and enhances, the surrounding environment.
- Restrict street closures in areas designated for open space preservation. All public rights-of-way should be maintained under public control.
- All publicly owned open space shall be managed by an open space district which will provide natural habitat management, weed and trash abatement, and safety patrols.

### **Chollas Creek**

Chollas Creek is a seasonal waterway that crosses the Eastern and City Heights communities, flowing diagonally from northeast to southwest. The creek continues through the neighborhoods of Southeast San Diego, finally reaching the San Diego Bay at the 32<sup>nd</sup> Street Naval Station. Much of the land bordering the creek is undeveloped and unused, due to intermittent flooding.



### **Goal**

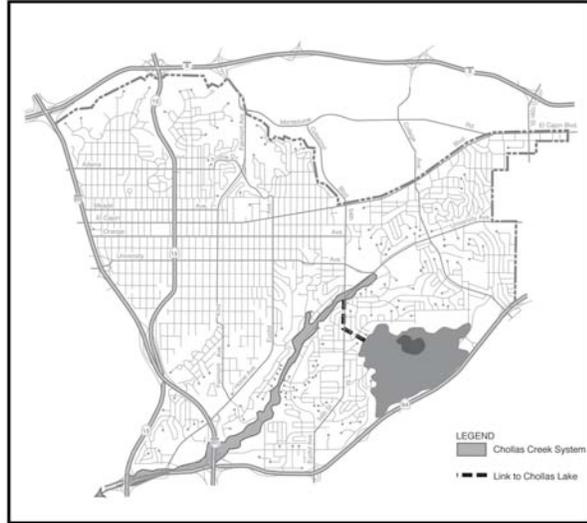
- To preserve and enhance Chollas Creek, making it accessible, while maintaining and rehabilitating its habitat values.

### **Recommendations**

- Revegetate the wetland areas with native wetland habitat. (see **Appendix C**)
- Provide soil erosion and flood protection in a manner sensitive to the park's habitat values, using natural materials that blend with the surrounding environment.
- Provide a pedestrian and bicycle linkage from Chollas Park to the Mid-City athletic area and other parks via the Chollas Creek canyon.
- More intensive uses within the Chollas Creek canyon, if recommended through a Chollas Creek Master Planning process, should strive to maintain the natural character and quality of the canyon and limit points of access.
- Properties along the rim of the park should provide setbacks with landscaping materials consistent with the wetland habitat and ambiance.
- Incorporate publicly owned properties adjacent to Chollas Creek into an open space/park maintenance district.
- Fully improve the Mid-City Athletic Area with soccer and baseball fields.

## **Chollas Lake Park**

The Chollas Lake Park is a resource-based park which includes Chollas Community Park, the Chollas Reservoir and its attendant land, some of which is part of an old abandoned dump which has been capped, and provides an excellent opportunity for park development. Although identified as a resource-based park, the area is not a pristine natural environment, and lends itself to development as a traditional large urban park.



### **Goal**

- To develop an urban resource-based park for Mid-City to service the area's 132,466 population and complement Balboa Park.

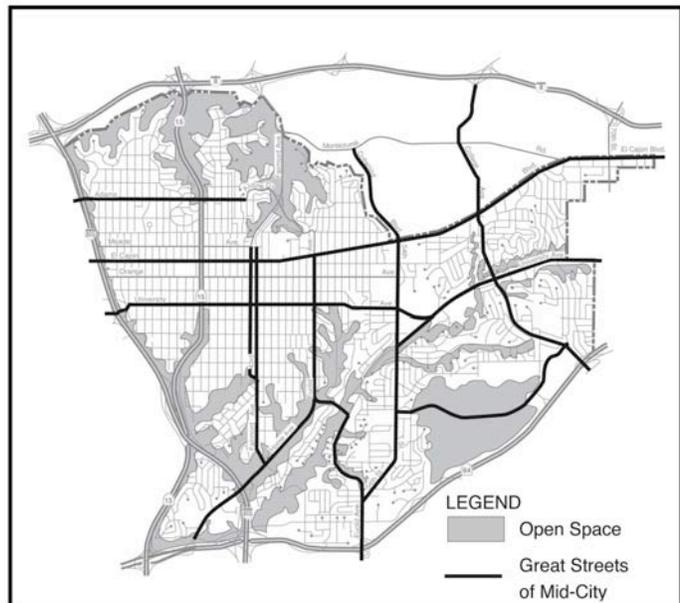
### **Recommendations**

- Develop the North Chollas Canyon area as per the North Chollas Park Plan.
- Pursue relocation of the City's Chollas Operations Station.
- Develop large sports field areas south of Chollas Lake to support the active population of Mid-City. Sports fields should accommodate a variety of games popular with the various ethnic groups of Mid-City.
- The South Chollas Park could also include an ethnic and artistic village area similar to Balboa Park's Spanish Village. This anchor of cultural activity would complement the 54<sup>th</sup> Street Cultural Center and tie in 54<sup>th</sup> Street and College Grove Drive as an important cultural and recreational nucleus of the Mid-City Community.
- Fences and gates where necessary should be provided in a manner that enhances and frames the park setting, not detract from it.
- Chollas Lake Park should be incorporated into the open space/parks maintenance district.
- Develop a park-use work program and elicit the services of artists to develop the park as a showcase for the Mid-City communities.

## THE GREAT STREETS OF MID-CITY

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The flatter mesa of Mid-City west of Euclid Avenue has been developed in a grid pattern, bisected from north to south by freeways set below the elevation of the mesa in natural and man made canyons. East of Euclid Avenue, a curvilinear street pattern reflecting the varied topography of this area predominates. Both the central mesa and rolling eastern area are bisected east to west by major streets that, in the first half of the 1900s, served as the major transportation corridors between the center city and its suburban and rural settlements to the east.



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**Vision:** Reestablish Mid-City’s major streets as great boulevards where vehicular circulation complements, rather than dominates, other activities such as strolling, shopping, living and working.

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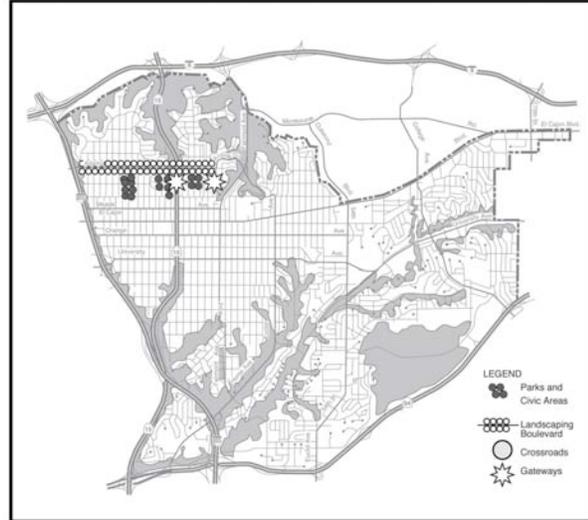
### Recommendations

- Encourage the planting and maintenance of street trees and landscaped medians.
- Encourage patterned crosswalks at intersections to reduce vehicle speeds.
- Repair and improve sidewalks including pop-outs at selected intersections.
- Provide adequate lighting for vehicles and pedestrians. Pedestrian-oriented acorn lights should be provided in very active pedestrian areas. Mid-block lighting programs should be expanded.
- Enhance freeway ramps as gateways to the community. Their design and landscaping should reflect their significance. Sponsor art competitions to design and improve at least one freeway interchange per year.
- Provide increased parking where demand is high by re-orienting streets for diagonal parking.
- Institute traffic calming improvements to establish a more efficient vehicular and pedestrian transportation system and more livable neighborhoods.

The following streets are identified as The Great Streets of Mid-City and, as such, their design should reflect their significance:

### **Adams Avenue**

Significant development along this trolley route began in the 1920s, forming the core of Normal Heights and Kensington. While there are a variety of businesses, most establishments offer neighborhood serving goods and services, along with a concentration of antique dealers. The Adams Avenue Business Improvement Association now includes the Kensington area to help it continue to pursue streetscape improvements, promotional efforts, and other programs.



### **Goal**

- To reinforce and enhance the historic, pedestrian-oriented urban village accommodating commerce, cottage industry and higher-density residential uses.

### **Recommendations**

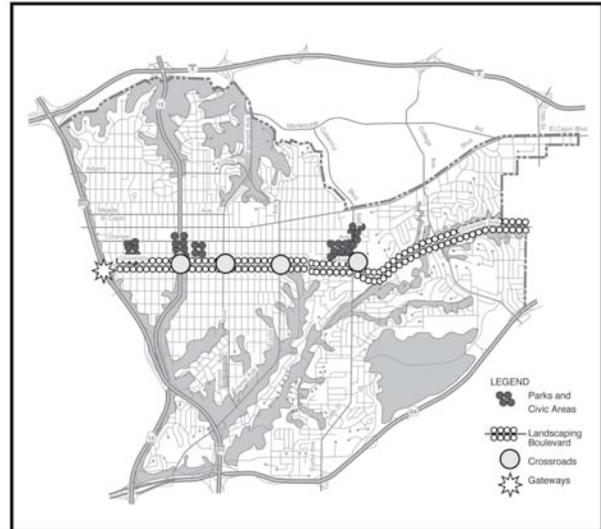
- Continue with public streetscape improvements, including street trees, historic pedestrian street lamps, sidewalk repairs and enhancement, bus shelters, and other appropriate street furniture.
- Commercial expansion should attempt to use existing structures or their historic character.
- Provide parking to the rear of businesses. In Normal Heights, parking may be located across the abutting alleys.
- Encourage lower scale, two- to three-story mixed-use development with residential units over retail.
- Expand parks and provide public plazas.
- Maintain or increase the width of sidewalks.
- Maintain on-street parking for the convenience of shoppers and the protection and comfort of pedestrians.

## **University Avenue**

University Avenue is an older commercial strip that developed along the trolley route that serviced it prior to 1950. The street today continues to be the hub of community commercial activity, with commercial storefronts throughout its length. A business improvement district has been formed and, in collaboration with other community organizations, has successfully sought public improvements to University Avenue.

### **Goal**

- To create a pedestrian-oriented urban village accommodating commerce, cottage industry and higher-density residential uses.



### **Recommendations**

- Design the street to reinforce a strong commercial corridor and its multi-cultural character.
- Provide improved traffic circulation and angle parking.
- Restore the historic trolley from downtown San Diego to the Euclid Tower.
- Improve the pedestrian experience with street trees, attractive bus stops, and specially designed directional signage.
- Pave alleys and develop mini-parks or urban plazas as settings for seating, eating, and people watching.
- Enhance building facades consistent with the historic and ethnic character of the area. Uniform signage and setbacks should be promoted.
- New development should be compatible with the historic ethnic character of the neighborhood.
- Buildings west of 54<sup>th</sup> Street should not exceed three stories and should conform to pre-determined colors and materials.
- Buildings east of 54<sup>th</sup> Street should not exceed two stories.
- Encourage new development to provide plazas and public seating areas at major intersections.
- Encourage public acquisition of vacant or under-used land for park or recreation development along the street.

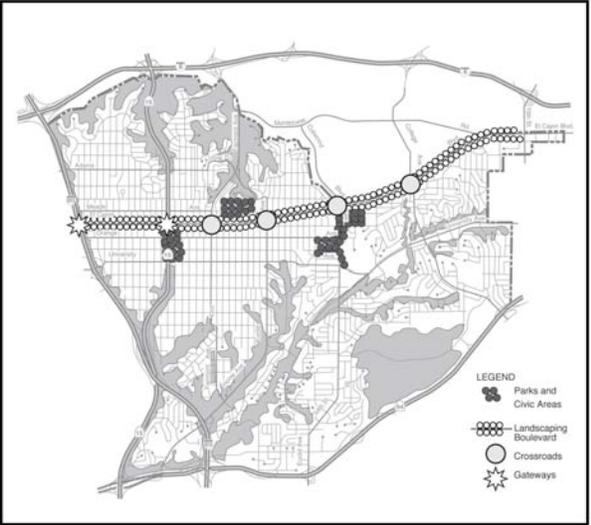
- Locate parking to the rear of buildings off the side streets to reduce curb cuts and traffic conflicts on University Avenue,
- Preserving the street for wider pedestrian sidewalks and/or angled parking.
- Convert vacant lots into parking lots that serve various stores and initiate the formation of a small-scale parking district.

**The Boulevard**

El Cajon Boulevard is a major regional East/West corridor linking San Diego’s central area to La Mesa, El Cajon and other cities to the east. It was the original highway prior to the development of I-8 along Mission Valley in the 1960s.

**Goal**

- To create a grand boulevard setting where larger new commercial, light manufacturing, residential and mixed-use development can locate.

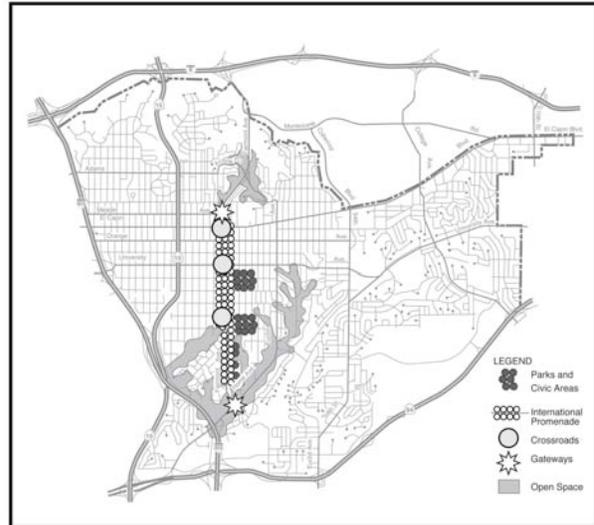


**Recommendations**

- Establish light rail transit service from downtown to San Diego State University.
- Create a strong commercial corridor with regional significance.
- Provide streetscape features to improve vehicular, public transit and the pedestrian experience for public transportation users. Features include street trees, paving patterns, landscape buffer, attractive bus and trolley stops, directional signage, a new neighborhood park, off-street parking.
- Encourage commercial facade improvements focusing on rehabilitating historic facades and improved signage, colors and materials as identified in the Boulevard Revitalization Program.
- Provide street furniture in contemporary styles that complement the character of the boulevard as identified in the Boulevard Revitalization Program.
- Encourage large multi-level buildings that conform to the color and material palette given in the revitalization program.
- Encourage new development to provide public plazas and seating space at major intersections.
- Off-street parking should be confined to the rear of buildings, with access from the side streets to reduce driveway conflicts with Boulevard traffic.
- Convert vacant lots for parking and link them so they may be used by various users.

## **43<sup>rd</sup> Street and Fairmount Avenue**

The International Promenade is located along the 43<sup>rd</sup> Street and Fairmount Avenue couplet, which links Mid-City to I-8 and Mission Valley to the north, and Interstate 805 (I-805) and SR-94 to the south. A number of ethnic enterprises have located near this area and it is one of the heaviest pedestrian-use areas in the community. Development opportunities make this area a natural site for the clustering of businesses catering to a regional clientele interested in buying imported products or locally made products and services reflective of the many ethnic groups in the Mid-City communities.



### **Goal**

- To provide the setting for the development of an international trade center where ethnically oriented goods and services could be offered to regional markets.

### **Recommendations**

- Encourage the consolidation of ethnically oriented businesses including retail, commercial recreation, restaurants, arts and crafts, imports, services, and light manufacturing of custom made items.
- Encourage mixed-use development, with retail or light manufacturing on the ground floor, services, office development and housing on upper floors.
- Foster pedestrian orientation and smaller scale commercial and light industrial development.
- Encourage building facade designs that include architectural detailing reflective of the various cultures in the community.
- Promote consistent design and function of 43<sup>rd</sup> Street and Fairmount Avenue. Public improvements, parking layouts, and eventually one-way traffic, should be engineered to encourage pedestrian movement. Encourage wider sidewalks, outdoor eating and sales areas, and banners advertising the area's international and ethnic assets.
- Plant additional street trees to mitigate heat gain resulting from paved surfaces.
- Establish angled parking bays to narrow the street travel way, reduce speed and increase parking capacity for businesses.
- Provide pedestrian-oriented "acorn" streetlights south of Meade Avenue.
- Provide enhanced paving intersections to encourage pedestrian crossings, and discourage vehicle speeding, through greater pavement "friction."

- Provide gateway structures to enhance the International Promenade at its entrances from the north and south.

**Euclid Avenue**

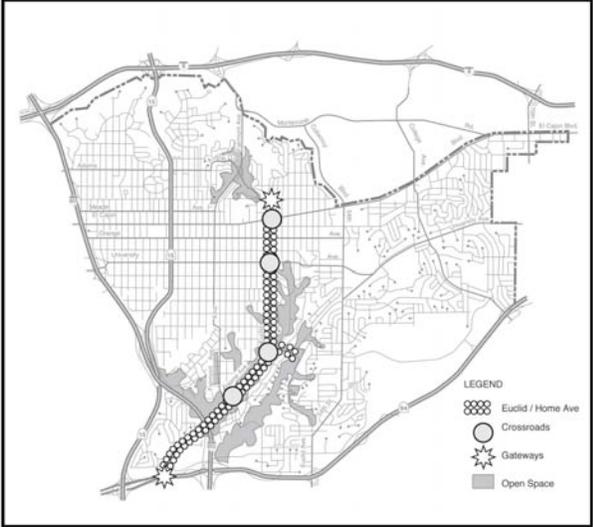
Euclid Avenue is one of the oldest streets in the community. The terminus of the streetcar service area for many year, it was the boundary between urban and rural San Diego for much of the 1900s.

**Goal**

- To build on to the existing street scale, a more efficient traffic flow supplemented by walk-in convenience services to surrounding neighborhoods.

**Recommendations**

- Maintain the mix of small-scale neighborhood commercial and low- to moderate-density residential.
- Do not permit large curb cuts. Instead, encourage no curb cuts or single-loaded one-way curb cuts linking the street with the alley, where most of the parking should be accessed.
- Plant street trees to provide shade and reduce heat island effects.
- Install pedestrian-oriented “acorn” lights to provide pedestrian safety and light up the street.
- Maintain on-street parallel parking.
- Enhance pedestrian crosswalks with patterned pavers to more clearly designate pedestrian movement and street crossings.



**Home Avenue**

Home Avenue is a wide auto-oriented street linking Euclid and Fairmount to the freeway (SR-94) to the South. Located in the middle of a canyon, the area has limited street frontage with miscellaneous commercial and residential development. A number of inland canyons spring from the street.

**Goal**

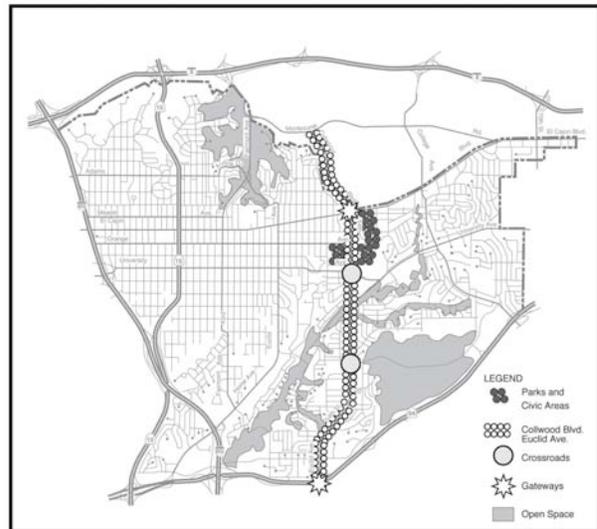
- To provide an auto-oriented community commercial area set in a canyon.

## Recommendations

- Maintain the commercial and residential mix in the area. Enhance auto-related commercial uses through perimeter landscaping and walls that buffer such uses from the street.
- Maintain the open residential atmosphere and predominant building height to preserve views of the hilly backdrop to the southeast.
- Enhance the streetscape through sidewalk landscaping and street median landscaping.
- Provide a combination of auto- and pedestrian-oriented lighting.
- Enhance crosswalks with patterned paving at key areas where there is an opportunity to link the east and west side of the streets.
- Establish a gateway at Home Avenue and SR-94 providing an identifiable entrance to Mid-City and the International Promenade district.
- Provide sidewalks where missing.

## 54<sup>th</sup> Street/Euclid Avenue

54<sup>th</sup> Street passes through three distinct districts between El Cajon Boulevard and SR-94. To the north, a center of cultural and institutional facilities lies between El Cajon Boulevard and University Avenue. Among these are Elementary, Middle, and Senior High schools, the Jewish Community Center, a small hospital and convalescent home, senior housing, and a community park. Between University Avenue and Euclid Avenue, 54<sup>th</sup> Street traverses Chollas Creek and several stable single-family neighborhoods. Euclid Avenue to SR-94 is characterized by community-serving commercial activity.



## Goals

- To foster further development of a civic area between El Cajon Boulevard and University Avenue including cultural, educational, and public health facilities serving the Mid-city population.
- To preserve and enhance single-family development between University Avenue and Euclid Avenue.
- To reinvigorate commercial activity on Euclid Avenue from 54<sup>th</sup> Street to SR-94.

## Recommendations

- Line the street with street trees to encourage walking and reduce heat gain.
- Install pedestrian-oriented acorn lights to enhance the sidewalk and pedestrian environment.
- Enhance paving at crosswalks to encourage pedestrian movement and reduce vehicle speed.
- Erect gateway signs on 54<sup>th</sup> Street at El Cajon Boulevard and Euclid Avenue at SR-94 identifying the Mid-City communities.

### At El Cajon Boulevard and University Avenue

- Educational facilities should be the hub of a major cultural area with theaters, art galleries, with arts and craft shops complimenting the more commercial development a few blocks to the west at 43<sup>rd</sup> and Fairmount.
- Focus the location of social service facilities such as senior housing and convalescent homes, clinics, doctors' offices and other supportive uses in the area.
- Improve visual access to Colina Del Sol Park, perhaps by grading the slope along 54<sup>th</sup> Street. This will improve the street environment and enhance security within the park.

### At University Avenue to Euclid Avenue

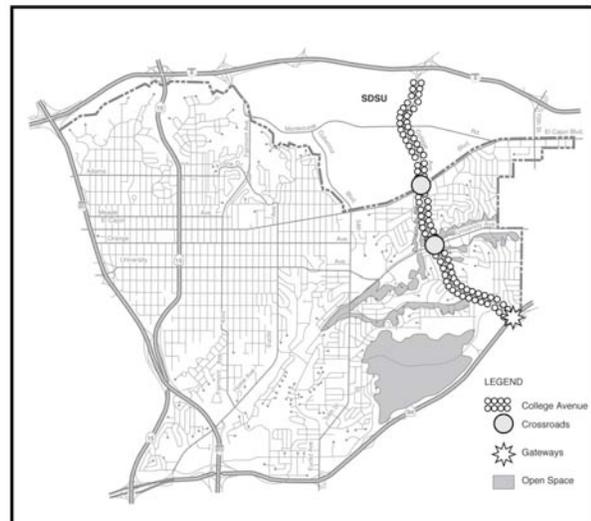
- Improve medians and landscaped buffers to create a boulevard through residential neighborhoods.
- Foster development of a “village center” between Redwood Street and College Grove Drive.
- Provide a pedestrian/bicycle bridge over 54<sup>th</sup> Street at Chollas Station Road to establish a safe and convenient link between Chollas Lake Park and Chollas Creek.

## College Avenue

College Avenue provides convenient access between the eastern neighborhoods and I-8 to the north and SR-94 to the south.

### Goal

- To enhance the visual character of College Avenue consistent with its significance to community circulation and reinforce the link between Mid-City’s eastern neighborhoods and the San Diego State University campus.



## Recommendation

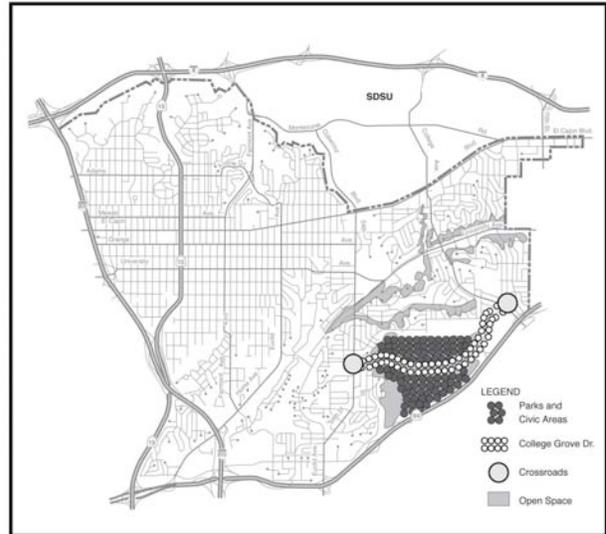
- Improve medians and landscaped buffers to create a boulevard through residential neighborhoods.

## College Grove Drive

College Grove Drive links College Avenue to 54<sup>th</sup> Street through the Chollas Reservoir area, a developing regional park. The College Grove shopping center anchors the eastern end of the street at College Avenue. A village center is contemplated at the west on 54<sup>th</sup> Street. A City of San Diego physical operations facility generates significant large vehicle traffic.

## Goal

- To develop a quality roadway through a major resource-based park



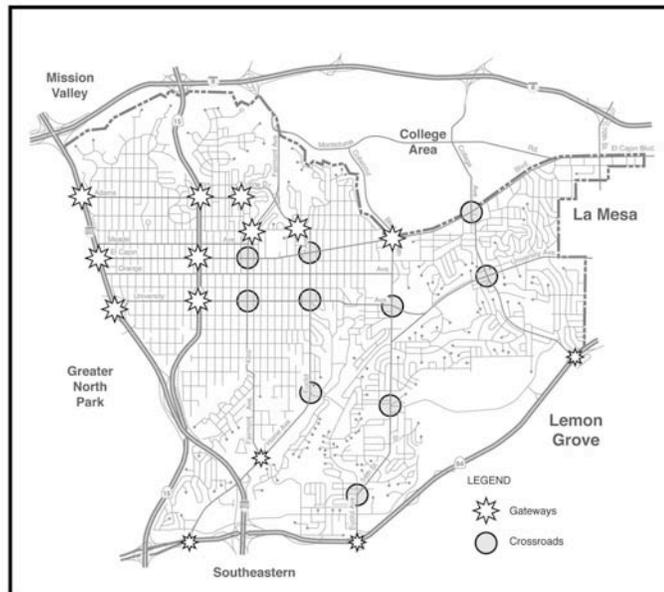
## Recommendations

- Public improvements should be consistent with the College Grove Drive Improvement Plan, incorporating landscaped buffers and island landscaping complementary to that planned for the new Chollas Park area.
- Incorporate a Class I pedestrian-biking promenade under landscaping to provide biking and walking alternatives to an otherwise auto-oriented development area.

# GATEWAYS

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Community gateways are structures or other improvements designed to establish a sense of place. Gateways can create a welcoming environment and help to establish neighborhood pride. Entry monuments, special landscaping, identification signs, urban plazas or other places that enhance pedestrian movement can be used to establish gateways.



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**Vision:** A community of welcoming features celebrating each urban node and neighborhood.

---

## Goal

- To establish gateways at freeway interchanges.

## Recommendations

- Gateways should be established at the following locations:

### Freeway Interchanges

- I-805 and El Cajon Boulevard
- I-805 and University Avenue
- I-805/Fairmount and Home Avenue
- I-805 and Madison Avenue
- SR-15 and El Cajon Boulevard
- SR-15 and University Avenue
- SR-15 at Adams Avenue
- SR-15 at Landis Street
- SR-94 and Home Avenue
- SR-94 and Euclid Avenue

SR-94 and College Avenue  
SR-94 and 47<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Van Dyke Avenue and Adams Avenue  
Aldine Drive and Euclid Avenue

Freeway-related gateways can be designed with landscaping, lighting, and identification signs or monuments.

**Streets**

Fairmount Avenue at Meade Avenue  
54<sup>th</sup> Street and El Cajon

Street gateways can be designed with landscaping features, monuments and/or urban places.

## CROSSROADS

---

Crossroads are main street intersections. Crossroad treatments focus on creating urban places designed for pedestrian use. This typically involves establishing larger building setbacks, providing space for a landscaped urban plaza.

Often building design at the corners hugging a crossroads is very important since buildings can create excellent settings and provide a sense of place and landmark that people can use for orientation purposes.

### Goal

- To enhance crossroads as important places of pedestrian interchange.

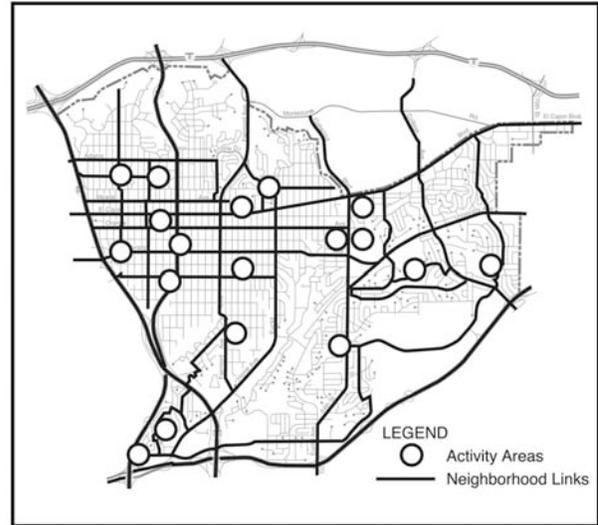
### Recommendations

- The following locations have been identified as natural “crossroads” locations:
  - 43<sup>rd</sup> Street at El Cajon Boulevard
  - 43<sup>rd</sup> Street at University Avenue
  - 43<sup>rd</sup> Street at Fairmount Avenue
  - Fairmount Avenue at El Cajon Boulevard
  - Fairmount Avenue at University
  - Fairmount Avenue at Poplar Street
  - Euclid Avenue at El Cajon Boulevard
  - Euclid Avenue at University Avenue
  - Euclid Avenue at Home Avenue
  - Euclid Avenue at 54<sup>th</sup> Street
  - College Avenue at El Cajon Boulevard
  - College Avenue at University Avenue
  - College Avenue at College Grove Drive
  - 54<sup>th</sup> Street at University Avenue
  - 54<sup>th</sup> Street at College Grove Drive
- In commercial areas, the first floor of buildings should be carefully set back from intersections to create large public areas at the corner. Restaurants, flower shops, and similar enterprises should be encouraged to help blur the transition between interior and exterior spaces.
- In residential areas, building setbacks at intersections should be maintained to allow for greater visibility. Setbacks should be landscaped.
- Sidewalk pop-outs should be created to give greater space protection to the pedestrian, and reduce the actual vehicular crossing.
- The vehicular intersection should be staked-out with permanent markings such as patterned paving, painted pedestrian crossings, etc.
- Good lighting conditions have to be provided to enhance vehicular and pedestrian visibility.

## OTHER NEIGHBORHOOD LINKS

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A number of secondary streets provide important links between neighborhood activity areas or neighborhood civic centers. These streets are traditional neighborhood pathways, many well maintained with mature street trees, historic pedestrian lighting, and ceremonial gates that reinforce neighborhood identity. Too often, however, the importance of these neighborhood links has been lost and the streets need major repair and enhancement.



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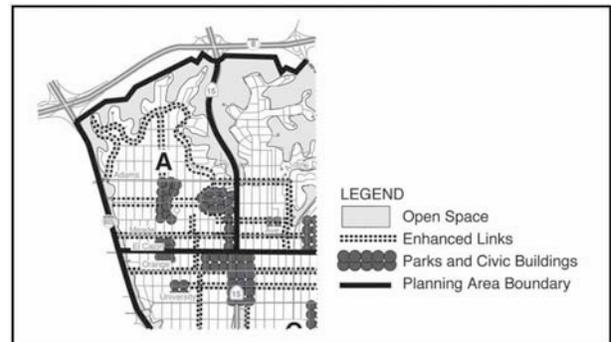
**Vision:** A system of neighborhood links that promote pride in community by providing a beautiful and healthy setting for both pedestrian and driver.

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### Recommendations

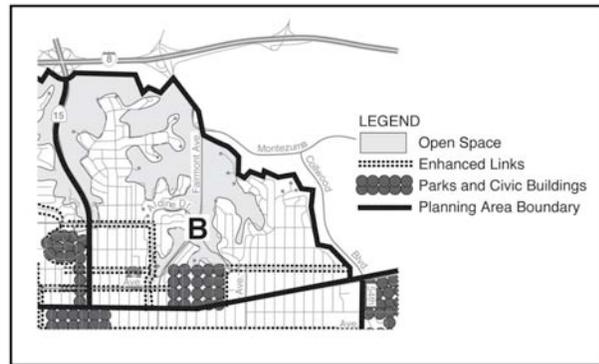
#### Normal Heights

The following streets should be improved by adding street trees, providing pedestrian-oriented streetlights and enhancing crosswalks at key intersections as shown in the map below.



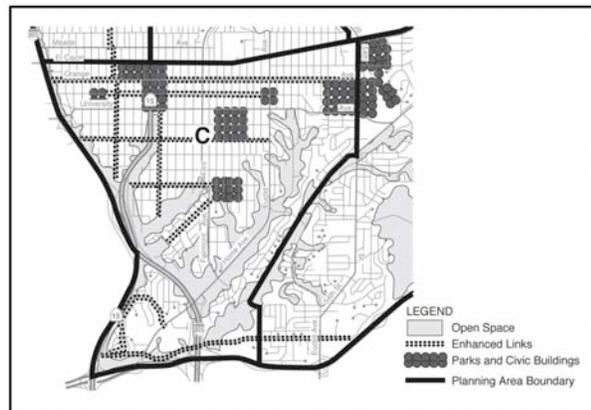
### **Kensington/Talmadge**

The following streets should be improved by adding street trees, providing pedestrian-oriented streetlights and enhancing crosswalks at key intersections as shown in the map below.



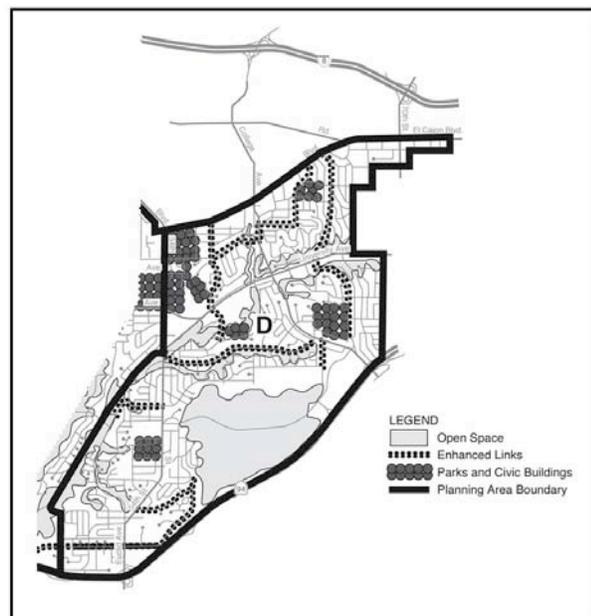
### **City Heights**

The following streets should be improved by adding street trees, providing pedestrian-oriented streetlights and enhancing crosswalks at key intersections as shown in the map below.



### **Eastern Community**

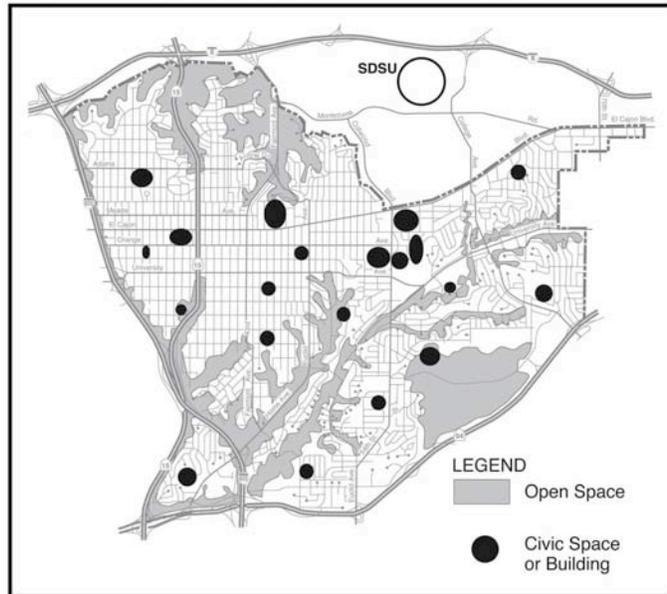
The following streets should be improved by adding street trees, providing pedestrian-oriented streetlights and enhancing crosswalks at key intersections as shown in the map below.



## CIVIC SPACES AND BUILDINGS

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One of the keystones of this Plan is the extensive use of joint use civic facilities, where various government, school, and non-profit community agencies make use of facilities available to them at various times of the day.



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**Vision:** Schools and other civic destinations that are centrally located, provide needed open space and are accessible as neighborhood civic centers.

---

### Recommendations

- Create more neighborhood parks by obtaining vacant land. Consider utilizing open space occupied by streets and alleys. Sections of under-used streets can be closed to create mini-parks, bike trails or landscaped pedestrian walkways.
- Bus stops and seating areas can be set back from sidewalks and planted with trees and shrubs.
- School grounds should be enhanced to serve the dual purpose of school playground and neighborhood park, including turf, landscaped buffers between streets and playing areas, tot lots and other amenities.
- New building or remodeling projects in the commercial zones should contribute landscaped areas. Major projects should include permanent public seating areas or mini-plazas.
- Improve existing undeveloped or partially developed parks. Facilities should meet neighborhood needs for seniors with safe and comfortable seating and walking areas. Residents use parks for family gatherings, requiring picnic tables, barbecues, etc.
- Standard active parks of two or more acres should be collocated with other public facilities such as schools, libraries, fire stations, etc., in order to assure good maintenance and security.

- Joint use facilities should be designed to open into the community's other public areas, such as streets or parks.
- Entrances to facilities should be prominent and consciously designed so visitors feel at ease and welcome as they enter.
- Gates and fences should be carefully designed as a feature in themselves, a work of art, rather than an afterthought.
- Buildings should have prominent features that are viewed from far away, such as towers and clocks that can be used as orientation beacons.
- Public facilities should be clustered so they have greater use over time. For example, two elementary schools side by side can be converted, as needed, into middle and senior high schools. When the population warrants, they could become local college sites in the neighborhood, or other civic building needed at the time.
- Encourage development of park areas at street ends where additional land can be consolidated by street closures combined with land acquisition.
- Provide public art.

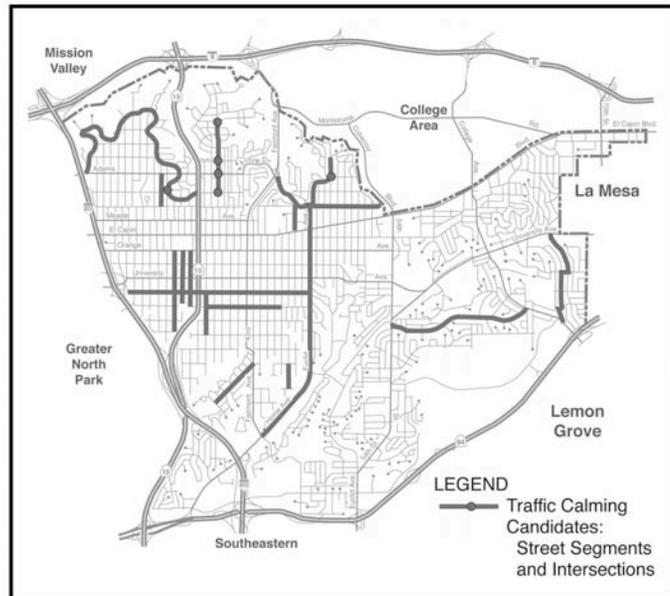
## TRAFFIC CALMING FOR NEIGHBORHOOD STREETS

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The Mid-City street system exhibits both grid and curvilinear street patterns. While such a system provides traffic with many alternate routes, often diminishing traffic congestion along the major corridors, many potential homeowners are deterred by the noise and danger of through-traffic. Further, existing residents turn their living environments, attention and eyes away from the street, leaving the neighborhood street as a no-man's land with little or no security.

Residents have approached the City with numerous petitions for four-way stops, hoping to regulate vehicle speeds. Unfortunately, many drivers

fail to observe these stop signs, increasing the threat to pedestrians, bicyclists and other motorists. One way to address neighborhood traffic problems and reduce excessive vehicle speeds in the residential neighborhoods is to enhance the roadway for improved non-vehicular circulation. Such "traffic calming" programs have shown that slower vehicular speeds are achievable, and acceptable to many drivers, when the environment is improved. This, in turn, will help make Mid-City neighborhoods competitive with suburban neighborhoods.



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**Vision:** Streets that are neighborhood centers of activity for walking, bicycling, visiting with the neighbors, and experiencing a pleasant drive.

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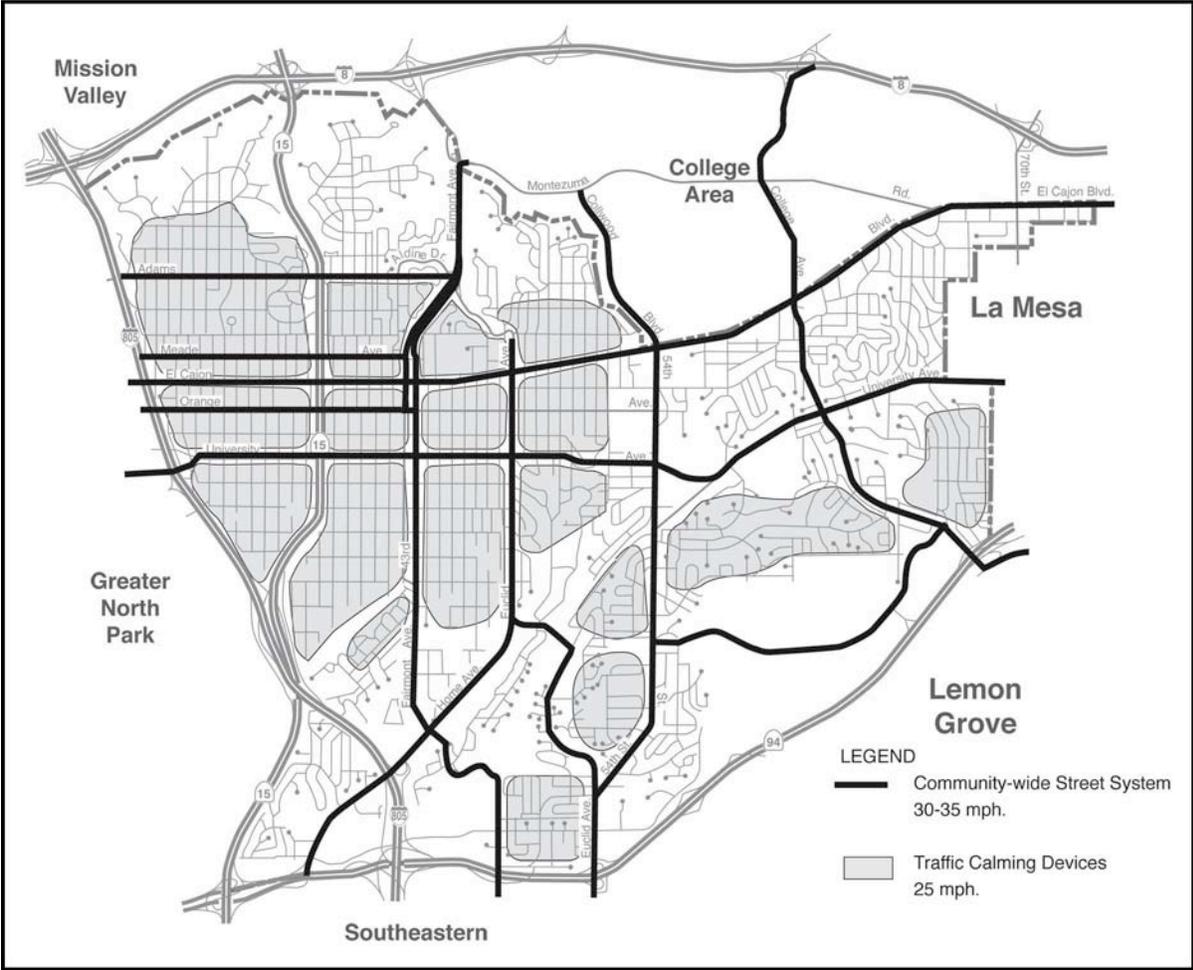
### Goal

- To improve the livability of neighborhoods by reducing inappropriate neighborhood traffic and vehicle speeds.

### Recommendations

- Apply traffic calming methods as described in **Appendix D** to reestablish the purpose and function of neighborhood streets.

**Figure 15**  
**Community-wide Street System**



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## **IV-D LAND USE ELEMENT**

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A cluster of communities that rivals many incorporated cities in size, Mid-City accommodates residential, office, commercial, industrial and institutional land uses. Residential densities in the community range from one to 75 dwelling units per acre. A variety of housing types, including Craftsman-style bungalows, single-family tract home development, apartment courts, six- and eight-plex apartment buildings, and multi-story senior housing centers are represented. Commercial developments take the form of neighborhood centers and districts, strip centers and regional shopping centers. Limited industrial development is concentrated in the southern portion of the City Heights and Eastern Area Communities. Institutional land use ranges from the City's Operations Center to Navy Housing to the Police Shooting Range and the Mid-City Police Substation. Critical issues related to institutional uses are addressed in the Public Facilities and Services Element. A deficiency of parks, schools, and other public facilities limit the ability of the Mid-City communities to effectively accommodate population growth forecast for the area.

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**Residential**

**Commercial**

**Industrial**

## RESIDENTIAL

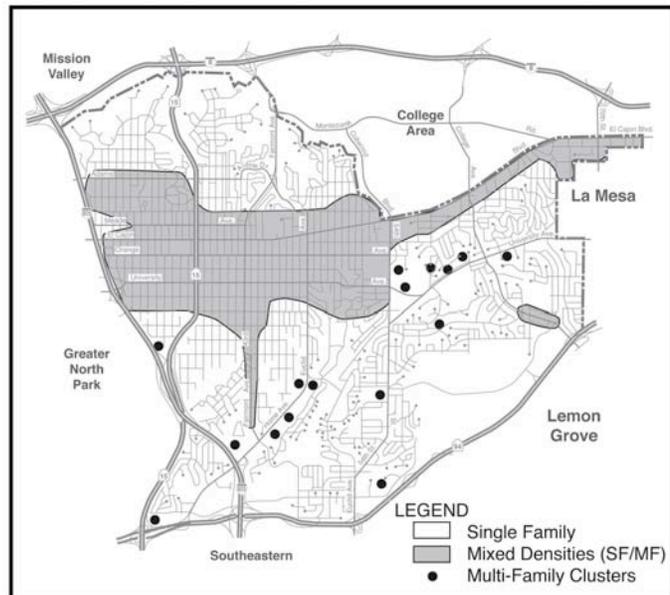
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Development in the older communities of Kensington-Talmadge, Normal Heights and City Heights was begun near the beginning of the Twentieth Century, spurred by the introduction of streetcar (trolley) service along Adams Avenue and University Avenue.

This development was characterized by single-family neighborhoods centered around commercial strips. Craftsman and Spanish Colonial Revival styles dominated single-family construction prior to the Second World War.

More recent development of the Eastern Area is also characterized by single-family development. Here, the varied topography and economic advantages of tract home development are reflected in curvilinear streets, cul-de-sacs and auto-oriented shopping centers.

Many single-family neighborhoods have been altered physically and demographically by the introduction of often ill-designed multifamily housing units during the 1970s and 1980s. This intensification in land use occurred disproportionately in the southern areas of Normal Heights and Kensington-Talmadge, and northern area of City Heights. While providing an abundance of lower cost housing opportunities, this development has exacerbated the existing shortage of parks, libraries, schools and other public facilities. Growth management policies, subsequently adopted to address these deficiencies, have not substantially reduced deficiencies in public facilities.



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**Vision:** A stable community, characterized by a diverse array of well designed and maintained neighborhoods with affordable housing that caters to a full range of family and living styles.

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## HOUSING BALANCE

The 1991 Housing Element of the General Plan established a low-income housing fair share goal for Mid-City of 100 dwelling units, compared to a citywide goal of 9,300 units. The goal was minimal due to the concentration of lower income households already living in Mid-City, which the communities have more than met with the construction of several subsidized projects. While the satisfaction of this goal points to the need to attract more

market rate housing, an ongoing effort is needed to maintain the existing supply of affordable units, which may revert to market rate under certain subsidy programs.

### **Goal**

- To foster the development of an economically and socially balanced residential community.

### **Recommendations**

- Encourage new housing construction in a variety of types and sizes in order to meet the needs of future residents in all socio-economic brackets. In view of the abundance of low- and moderate-income housing, encourage new construction of market rate housing and home ownership in Mid-City's lower income areas in order to upgrade the overall value of the housing stock in those areas.
- Stop the concentration of subsidized housing, social services, and residential care facilities in the Mid-City communities. Locate any additional facilities along transportation corridors.
- Encourage quality family and senior citizen housing projects designed to accommodate the needs of these populations, including the conversion of existing high-density apartment projects to fewer units with more bedrooms to house the concentration of large households in City Heights.

## **NEIGHBORHOOD CONSERVATION**

### **Goal**

- To protect and enhance the quality of Mid-City neighborhoods.

### **Recommendations**

- Encourage new market rate housing construction in a variety of types, sizes and costs to meet the needs of residents in all socio-economic brackets.
- Preserve existing affordable housing units, particularly where rent subsidies may be expiring.
- Provide and expand assisted home ownership opportunities and cooperative housing projects to afford renters a mechanism to achieve ownership.
- Establish and support an organization dedicated to providing training in good property management practices to owners of multifamily properties.
- Continue to expand housing rehabilitation programs in all residential subareas, especially for owner occupied units.
- Preserve well-designed existing housing stock that might be the source of low and moderate income housing in the future through adequate maintenance and rehabilitation.
- Protect existing low to moderate income housing by rehabilitating single-family and multifamily units, both rental and owner occupied.

- Retain, to the maximum feasible extent, single-family and two-family low- and low-medium-density residential areas and preserve existing two-family districts as the prevailing housing pattern in the neighborhoods.
- Regulate building size to maintain neighborhood scale and character.
- Retrofit existing older six to eight unit apartment complexes located in the midst of single-family neighborhoods by increasing unit size and decreasing density to provide needed larger units and a better integration into the neighborhood.
- Eliminate illegal non-conforming uses through code enforcement or code changes.
- Adopt and enforce minimum property maintenance standards.
- Explore newly developed multifamily housing designs such as row housing that blur the distinction between multifamily and single-family products to achieve greater density while maintaining neighborhood character and fostering home ownership.

## **OWNERSHIP**

### **Goal**

- To foster residential ownership in Mid-City.

### **Recommendations**

- Provide and expand assisted home ownership opportunities.
- Provide a marketing program to encourage business owners, managers, and employees to live in Mid-City.
- Develop cooperative housing projects to afford renters a mechanism to achieve ownership.

## **DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES**

### **Goals**

- To foster well-designed and maintained development in existing neighborhoods.
- To ensure that new development is consistent with neighborhood vision.
- To minimize obstacles to the rehabilitation or expansion of older residential structures.
- To maintain and enhance open spaces within residential areas.
- To ensure proper maintenance and security in residential development.

### **Recommendations**

- Apply urban design criteria to single-family and multifamily development by incorporating design guidelines into new ordinances and applying them to appropriate areas. These criteria will include standards for parking, height and bulk considerations, siting of structures, creative landscaping, open space preservation, family-oriented development and exceptional architectural detailing.
- Implement incentives for the removal of blight.

- Establish and apply standards for improvements of the building facade, yard areas and landscaping to older six to eight multifamily apartment buildings with parking in the front yard.
- Establish and support an organization dedicated to providing training in good property management practices to owners of multifamily properties.
- Limit encroachment of residential development into designated open space.
- Minimize obstacles to expansion of older residential structures with desirable design qualities.
- Encourage adherence to the principles of crime prevention through environmental design.
- Ensure that new development reflects neighborhood character in such characteristics as height, setbacks, massing, landscaping, roofs, windows, front porches, street facade, and architectural details.
- Encourage onsite management of multifamily developments.
- Establish a maintenance pool for smaller rental developments, minimizing the cost of professional apartment management services.
- Ensure that single-family development in down-zoned multifamily areas is appropriately scaled and oriented. Use Re-building Plan for Normal Heights (1985) as an example of the issues to be considered in the development of regulations applicable to this unique circumstance.
- Rehabilitate apartment courts and encourage development of new ones, perhaps providing reductions in on-site parking where on-street parking is sufficient.

## **TYPE AND LOCATION OF DEVELOPMENT**

### **Goal**

- To concentrate new higher-density development along transportation corridors with the highest densities at nodes.

### **Recommendations**

- Within areas zoned for single-family development and designated for open space preservation, limit development to one dwelling unit per lot.
- Restrict development in areas that are predominantly low-density, including those lots fronting on many east-west oriented streets, as shown in **Figure 10** above, to single dwelling units.
- Special development regulations should be applied to areas with single dwelling units on small lots to allow reduced or zero yard setbacks.
- Consider the use of companion units or “granny flats,” as defined and regulated by the Municipal Code, as a method of meeting affordable housing goals.
- Permit moderate-density residential uses as infill development and between nodes along transportation corridors.

- Permit higher-density residential development (one unit/600-1000 square feet) in the nodes along El Cajon Boulevard through a discretionary review process when special design features and community enhancements are provided.
- Encourage mixed-use development (retail or other commercial uses on the ground floor and residential on upper floors) along the commercial strips in transportation corridors.

## **SUPPORT USES AND FACILITIES**

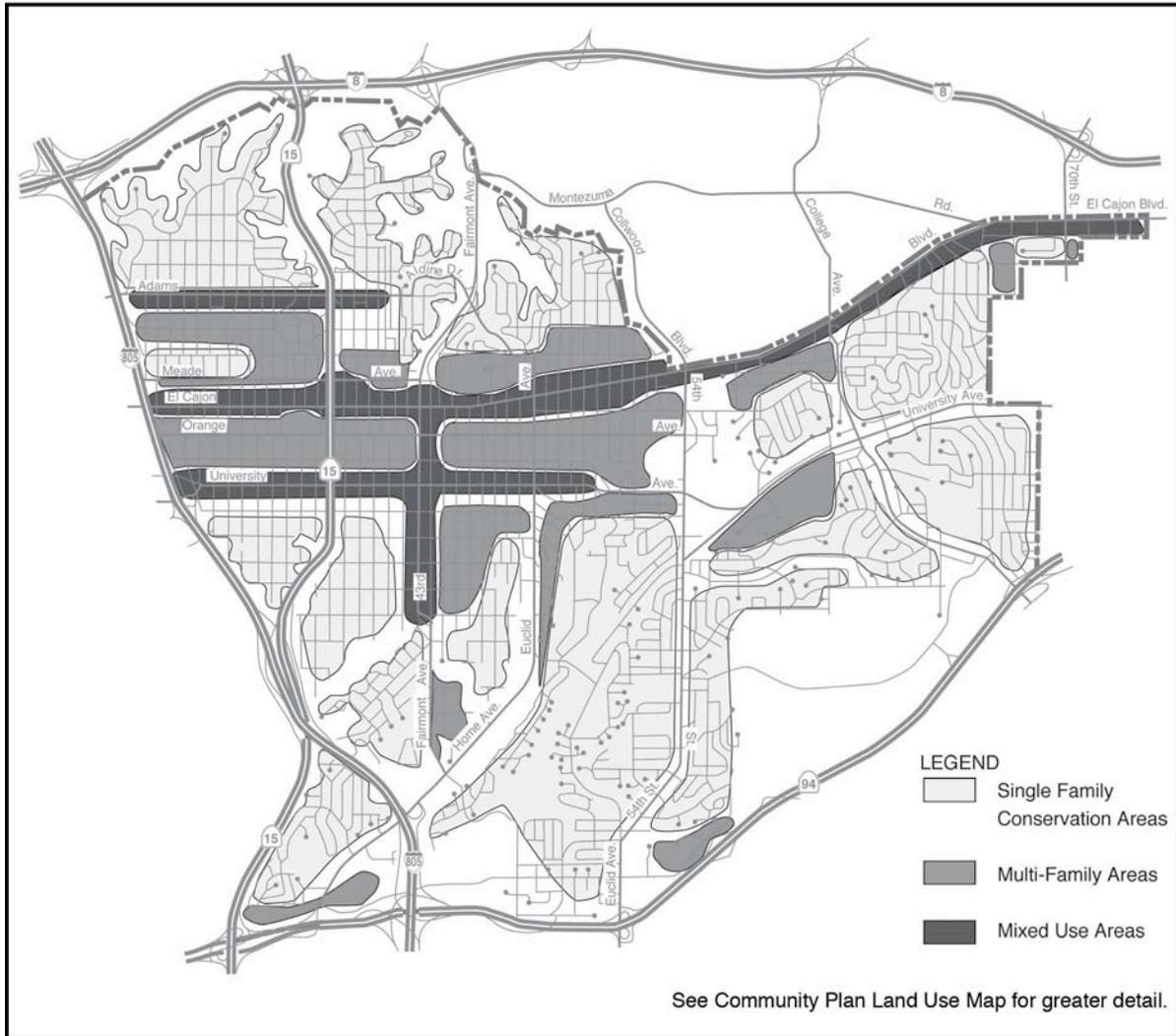
### **Goal**

- To foster development of schools, recreational centers, employment centers and parking reservoirs to support high quality residential development.

### **Recommendations**

- Ensure that adequate public facilities and infrastructure are in place prior to the construction of additional multifamily dwellings. Restrict new multifamily development within the service boundaries of schools where the local student population exceeds the following standards:
  - Elementary Schools: 100 students per acre, or the design capacity of permanent structures on existing school sites (500 students per school preferred)
  - Middle Schools: 70 students per acre, or the design capacity of permanent structures on existing school sites (1,000 students per school preferred)
  - High Schools: 70 students per acre, or the design capacity of permanent structures on existing school sites (1,500 students per school preferred)
- Enhance school and other public facilities to entice families to live in Mid-City rather than moving to other communities.
- Establish employment centers to provide jobs for residents.
- Provide adequate off-street parking.
- Locate private off-street parking to the rear of multifamily structure

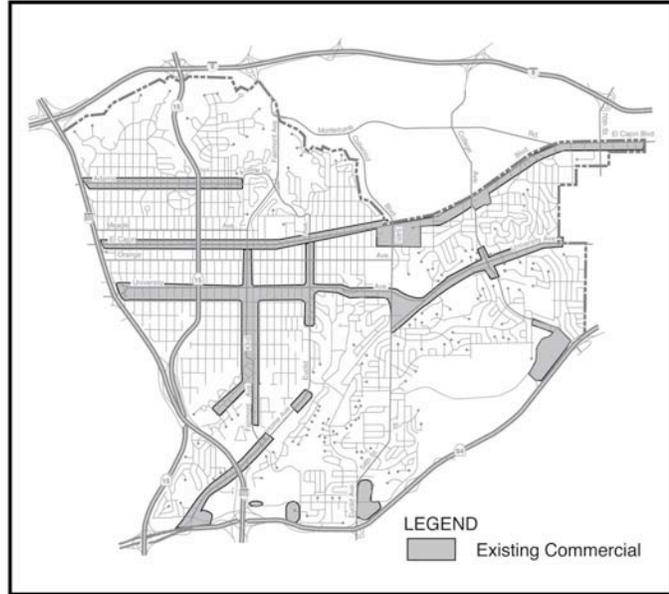
**Figure 16**  
**Conceptual Residential Element**



## COMMERCIAL

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Commercial activity within Mid-City ranges from auto-oriented El Cajon Boulevard to neighborhood-oriented Adams Avenue, with University Avenue reflecting characteristics of both. These major commercial corridors are supplemented by several shopping centers, assorted pockets of strip commercial and neighborhood-serving convenience stores. Retail sales represent the dominant commercial activity in the Mid-City. Office, wholesale, personal and commercial services and visitor-commercial enterprises are also present.



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**Vision:** Commercial corridors and centers providing vibrant shopping and business opportunities.

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### TYPE AND DISTRIBUTION OF USES

#### Goal

- To provide a full range of commercial goods and services to the Mid-City population.

#### Recommendations

- Restructure the commercial sector to take full advantage of Mid-City's population density and shopping patterns (refer to the Economic Development Element).
- Focus new commercial and mixed-use development in nodes to create strong centers of complementary activity. Such nodes should be centered around the intersection of major transportation corridors. These may include the intersections of El Cajon Boulevard and University Avenue with I-805.
- 35<sup>th</sup> Street, SR-15, 43<sup>rd</sup>/Fairmount, Euclid, and 54<sup>th</sup> Street. Lower-intensity, commercial, mixed-use, or residential use should be accommodated along designated linear areas between nodes.
- Increase the depth of commercial-residential transition zoning west of 54<sup>th</sup> Street. The transition zone should extend generally 300 feet from El Cajon Boulevard and up to 250

feet from University Avenue. Within these zones, property may be developed according to the designated residential zone, or, if lots are consolidated such that the property fronts on the commercial corridor, they may be developed with those commercial and/or residential uses permitted in the abutting commercial zone. With the exception of development within the node surrounding the interchange of El Cajon Boulevard and State Route 15, a discretionary permit should be required for development proposals that do not include a residential component.

- Along that portion of Adams Avenue west of East Mountain View Drive and 39<sup>th</sup> Street, a transition zone should generally extend 50 feet from the commercial zone. Use of this transition zone should be limited to commercial parking.
- Residential-only projects should not be permitted in commercially designated areas along Adams Avenue and should be restricted in other commercial areas.
- Concentrate commercial enterprises serving regional markets reliant on freeway access along I-805, Highway 94, and State Route 15.
- The Grove Shopping Center on SR-94 should be redeveloped to provide regional shopping and entertainment opportunities.
- The commercial nodes at the I-805 and State Route 15 gateways (University Avenue and El Cajon Boulevard) should accommodate hotels, restaurants, retailers requiring large structures and parcels, and gasoline stations with auto repair.
- Light manufacturing and assembly activities, such as bakeries and garment manufacturing, should be accommodated along selected major commercial corridors.
- Concentrate medium- to high-intensity mixed-use commercial, light manufacturing and medium-density residential development along the west side of State Route 15. Ground floor street elevations should be reserved for retail, entertainment and recreational uses. Residential, hotel and office uses should be encouraged on upper floors.
- All manufacturing facilities that occupy commercial street frontage should observe transparency requirements consistent with guidelines applicable to commercial development, perhaps by incorporating retail outlets for the sale of products manufactured onsite.
- A commercial revitalization program should be undertaken to foster redevelopment along Euclid Avenue, south of Westover Place.
- A center of ethnically oriented commercial activities should be encouraged within an “International Marketplace” bounded by El Cajon Boulevard and University Avenue at Fairmount Avenue and 43<sup>rd</sup> Street. In addition to restaurants and retail outlets, small- to medium-scale food processing and craft-oriented manufacturing facilities should also be accommodated. Special regulations should be considered to accommodate cultural needs, such as in the processing and sales of food products.
- Establish a center of civic and recreational activity in the 54<sup>th</sup> Street corridor between El Cajon Boulevard and University Avenue. Encourage cultural and non-profit organizations, artisans, hotels, professional offices and art galleries to locate in this area. Consolidate schools, playground and park areas, clustering building areas for most efficient mixed-use.

- Similar to the envisioned Cultural Center Complex, consideration should be given to educational, recreational, spiritual, and/or entertainment uses for the large site at the southeast corner of University Avenue and Aragon Drive.

Note: This recommendation was not reviewed by the Planning Commission.

- Provide for the establishment and continuation of neighborhood businesses such as corner stores at appropriate crossroad locations in the neighborhoods. Such establishments may not necessarily be required to be shown on the community plan map, and should be granted relaxed processing and parking requirements to establish, continue, or expand the use, under the following circumstances:
  1. The establishment provides desired neighborhood goods or services;
  2. The establishment has had an historical presence in the neighborhood or, for new and expanded establishments, is compatible with the style and character of the neighborhood; and
  3. There are no significant impacts related to traffic, parking, noise, or other environmental impacts.
- Provide incentives such as residential density or commercial floor area bonuses for mixed-use infill development along established commercial corridors.
- Encourage reuse of existing commercial structures for non-retail activities (e.g., entertainment, manufacturing, etc.)
- Promote nighttime pedestrian activity in the commercial corridors by accommodating entertainment facilities, religious institutions and other enterprises that attract significant numbers of people during the evening hours.
- Provide an expanded array of commercial goods and services in neighborhoods that lack them, through appropriate regulatory and promotional activities.
- Develop specific regulations for the outdoor display of merchandise and signage, particularly within the public right-of-way.
- Accommodate expanded home occupation activities in varying [degrees for] pre-designated neighborhood areas.

## **DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES**

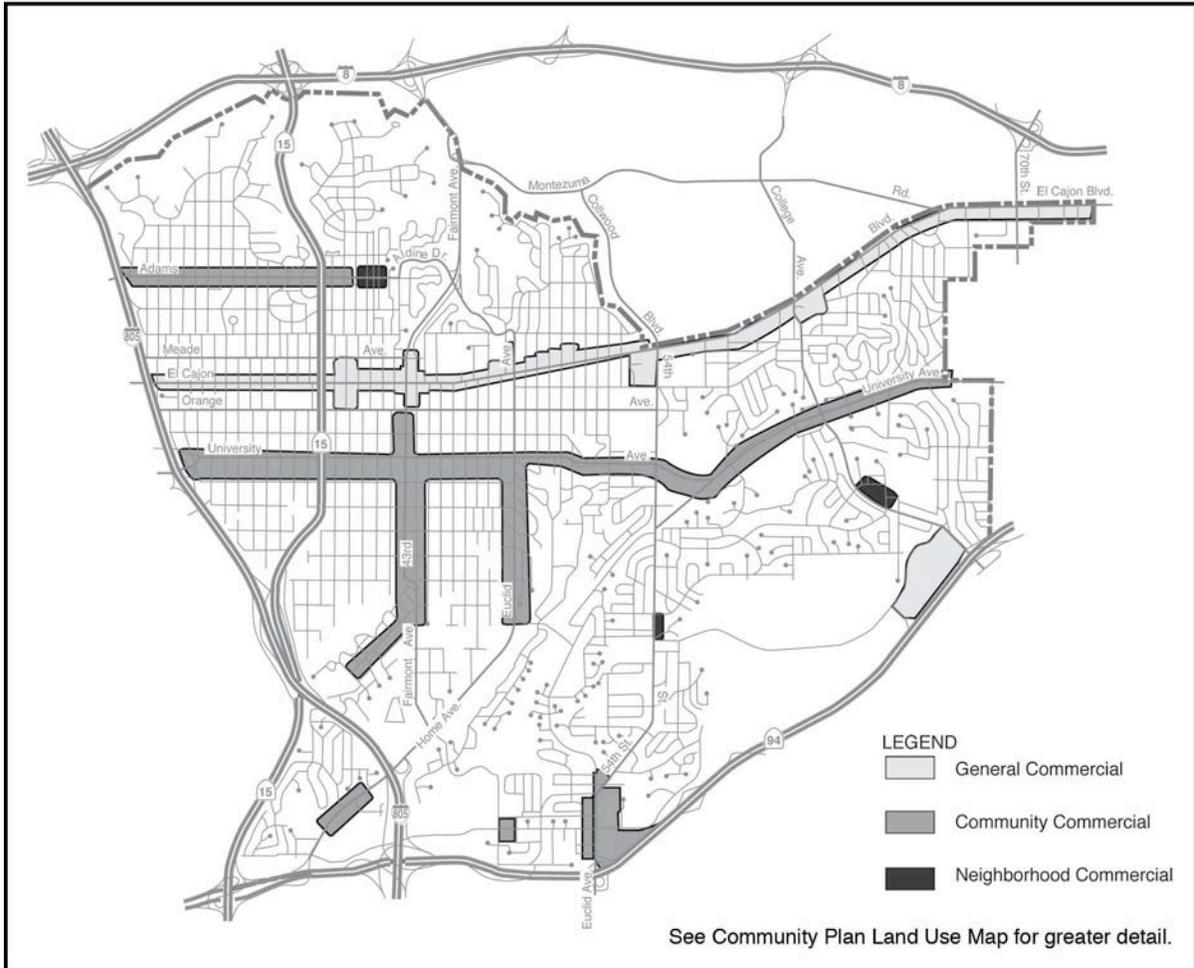
### **Goals**

- To provide attractive and functional commercial corridors and centers.
- To restore and enhance the appearance and function of existing commercial development.
- To maintain and strengthen the pedestrian orientation of commercial areas.
- To reflect the desirable historic character of commercial areas in form and function of new development.
- To foster a safer and more interactive community through the controlled mingling of uses, including commercial, residential, and industrial.

## Recommendations

- Revise development regulations as necessary to ensure quality design consistent with community character and to reduce visual clutter in commercial districts.
- Development within and adjacent to community gateways (see the **Urban Design Element**) should incorporate design elements (massing, landscaping) that reflect and reinforce the established design theme for the area.
- Historic structures should be rehabilitated for reuse.
- Storefronts should open up by providing ample display windows that are free of obstructions. Any security bars should be carefully designed to be unobtrusive, using dark colors and/or bar systems that can roll or accordion out of the way.
- Facade rehabilitation is encouraged. A professional designer should be involved to help maintain or restore the architectural intensity of the structure.
- Revise development regulations as needed to accommodate floor area requirements of modern commercial tenants.
- Revise development regulations as needed to establish pedestrian orientation in new development.
- Establish a residential density bonus for mixed-use development.
- Allow on-street parking bays to provide additional parking for small-scale businesses, especially neighborhood convenience centers, in exchange for better building design, street landscaping and lighting

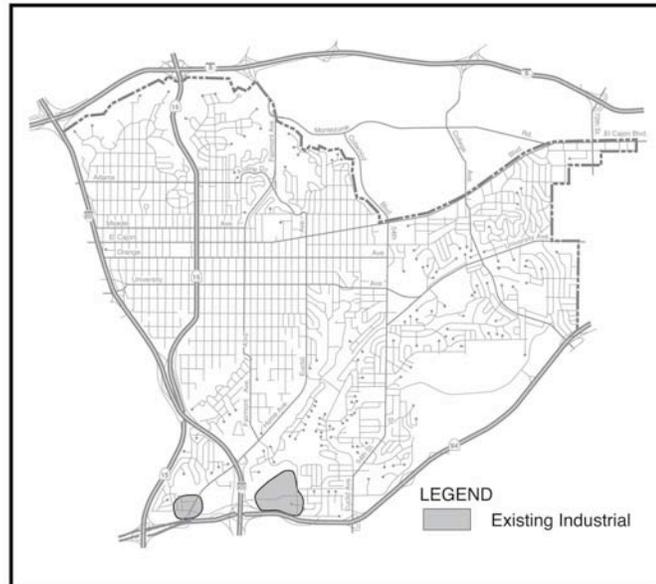
**Figure 17**  
**Conceptual Commercial Element**



## INDUSTRIAL

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Employment in the manufacturing sector is a necessary component to sustainable economic development. Base sector employment opportunities in Mid-City are limited by the price and availability of property zoned for industry. Due to the lack of large sites available for industrial development, strategies for the expansion of employment opportunities in Mid-City should focus on accommodating smaller scale employers.



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**Vision:** Provide a multiplicity of accessible base sector employment opportunities.

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### TYPE AND DISTRIBUTION OF USES

#### Goal

- To provide a wide range of employment opportunities complementary to the skills and aspirations of the community's workforce.

#### Recommendations

- Maintain industrial designation along Federal Boulevard, Home Avenue and 47<sup>th</sup> Street for employers requiring larger parcels and immediate freeway access. Examples of such enterprises include parts suppliers, machine shops, cleaning and dyeing works, boat and motorcycle manufacturers, building contractors, and beverage bottlers and distributors.
- Accommodate appropriately regulated apparel manufacture, electronic assembly, bakeries and other low-intensity light manufacturing situated behind commercial storefronts along major commercial corridors through the designation of additional industrial areas and the modification of commercial zone regulations.
- Designate areas for light manufacturing as shown on **Figure 18**. If portions of the Chollas Parkway right-of-way east of 54<sup>th</sup> Street are vacated, this area and any developable area abutting Chollas Creek should also be made available for commercial or industrial/light manufacturing use.

Note: This recommendation was not reviewed by the Planning Commission.

- Accommodate home industry and incubator facilities in the International Marketplace.

## **DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES**

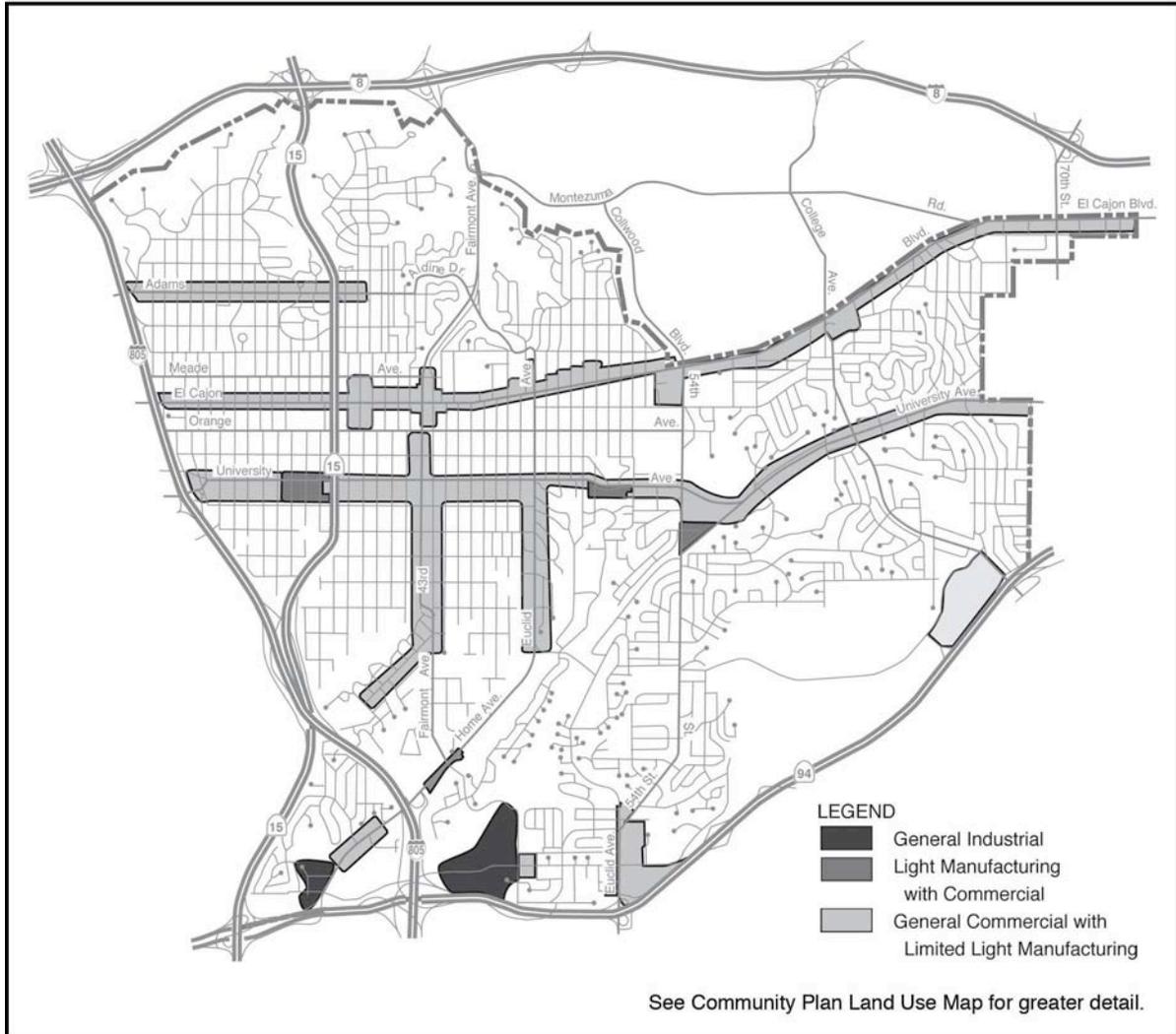
### **Goals**

- To provide employment centers which contribute positively to the character of the community.
- To add compatible light manufacturing and assembly development to Mid-City, bringing more jobs and affordable goods to the community.

### **Recommendations**

- Review development regulations, as necessary, to minimize potential conflicts between uses and to ensure consistency with neighborhood character.
- Ensure compliance with development regulations through vigilant code enforcement.
- Require that new industrial and light manufacturing development be adequately buffered from existing land uses through design features such as solid walls and enhanced landscaping.
- Provide for limited light manufacturing and assembly development of a scale and character compatible with existing commercial structures. New industrial structures should comply with streetscape requirements applicable to commercial establishments in the same zone including front setback, pedestrian entrances, transparency, landscaping and lighting. The display and sale of goods manufactured on the premises should be encouraged.

**Figure 18**  
**Conceptual Industrial Element**



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## **IV-E ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ELEMENT**

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The Mid-City communities stand at economic, as well as geographic crossroads. Regional retailing, the engine of Mid-City's economic success in the post-war years, is today dominated by shopping malls located on large tracts of land in suburban communities along the City's freeway system. A new strategy for economic growth is needed; one that builds upon the community's contemporary attributes.

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**Community Organization**

**Physical Design  
and Development**

**Development Regulations**

**Economic Restructuring  
and Reinvestment**

**Promotion**

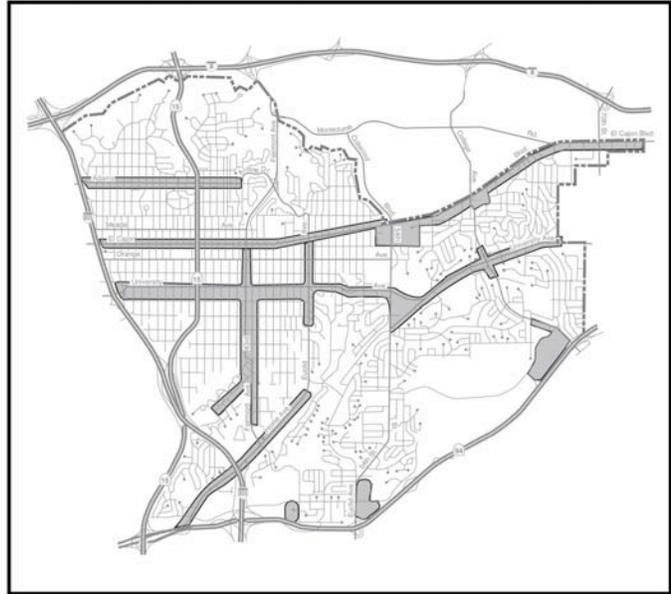
**Urban Nodes**

## BACKGROUND

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Throughout their history, the communities of Mid-City have provided San Diegans with suburban housing and shopping opportunities with easy access to downtown employment centers. Local employment was not a key component of Mid-City's development.

Between 1910 and 1960, Mid-City's population of residents and commuters supported thriving neighborhood- and region-serving commercial enterprises, particularly along the major east/west corridors. Following the Second World War, freeway construction, shopping center development, and further suburbanization resulted in a redirection of economic activity away from San Diego's older communities, including Mid-City.



Today, Mid-City's aging infrastructure lacks focus in the form of anchor businesses or defined districts and there remain few employment opportunities in the manufacture of goods for sale.

The following economic development goals and recommendations have been organized to correspond with the four tenets of the "Main Street" community revitalization strategy established by the National Trust for Historic Preservation and adopted by the business improvement associations active in the Mid-City.

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**Vision:** A vital "City within a City," providing a wide range of housing, employment and shopping opportunities accessible to all residents of the Mid-City, will be realized.

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## COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION

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### Goal

- To improve communication and cooperation both within the business and residential communities.

### Recommendations

- Establish and expand property- and tenant-based business improvement districts.
- Support business incubators with financial assistance and other incentives.
- Support efforts to establish benefit assessments for maintenance along commercial corridors.

## PHYSICAL DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT

---

### Goals

- To enhance the image of local commercial districts.
- To establish an atmosphere conducive to district shopping.

### Recommendations

- Accentuate nodes and gateways with tree plantings and community identifying landmarks, and the placement of high-intensity development near the street.
- Establish recognizable gateways and districts within the Mid-City communities as described in the **Urban Design Element**.
- Design infrastructure and lighting in keeping with district themes where possible.
- Encourage pedestrian activity and the use of public transit through public and private investment in quality streetscape improvements including landscaping, crosswalk paving, lighting and other pedestrian-oriented enhancements. The City's storefront improvement program should be maintained and expanded.
- Maintain and expand storefront improvement and other programs, such as landscaping rebates, which provide matching funds to business owners who enhance their properties.
- Increase business district parking through the acquisition of property for parking reservoirs located behind existing businesses and the creative redesign of existing on-street parking.
- Enhance the character and security of alleys through public and private investment in lighting, landscaping, and litter control.
- Create incentives for builders and remodelers to incorporate architectural elements that reflect the ethnic diversity of the community.

## **DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS**

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### **Goal**

- To preserve and enhance the character of the Mid-City by those regulatory measures least detrimental to the economic viability of the community.

### **Recommendations**

- Expand the use of the transition zone to allow the expansion of commercial uses. The transition zone should extend from a maximum of one-half to one block off of El Cajon Boulevard to as little as fifty feet past the commercial zoning on Adams Avenue. Some restrictions may be appropriate in some areas, such as limiting the use to parking or requiring a discretionary permit.
- Actively monitor and enforce the provisions of conditional use permits, but do not apply sunset provisions that unduly diminish business viability.
- Develop varying levels of home occupation including live/work lofts, to encourage incubator business development out of the home.
- Develop simple regulations for street vendor activity.
- Develop regulations to permit local food production.

## **ECONOMIC RESTRUCTURING AND REINVESTMENT**

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### **Goals**

- To recast Mid-City's commercial corridors as neighborhood- and community-oriented shopping and employment centers.
- To improve accessibility of employment centers within and outside the community.
- To encourage development of manufacturing enterprises to expand employment opportunities for the residents of Mid-City.

### **Recommendations**

- Partner with area schools to improve the quality and accessibility of educational opportunities.
- Develop and implement a comprehensive revitalization strategy based on the National Trust For Historic Preservation's Main Street model. Such a program would address community participation, economic restructuring, physical improvement of commercial areas and promotion of the community's attributes and businesses.
- Develop and maintain a database providing immediate access to commercial real estate market information.
- Provide the public infrastructure necessary to leverage private capital investment.

- Introduce light manufacturing, and other employment generating uses, along major transportation corridors. Ensure that employment generating land uses are compatible with neighborhood character through revisions in development regulations and permit review requirements.
- Increase the rate of owner occupancy of residential and commercial property.
- Provide incentives for business persons to own their business properties.
- Expand opportunities for home-based businesses, including the ability to have a limited number of employees and customers on the property. A range of activity levels, from home offices in single-family zones to more intense uses perhaps including apparel assembly in multifamily zones, should be defined and appropriately regulated.
- Establish opportunities for live/work lofts and other developments designed to accommodate a combination living and working environment.
- Support local food production by providing locations and support for persons who grow and market their own food crops.
- Address failures of the credit delivery system by cooperating in the establishment of new Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFI).

## **PROMOTION**

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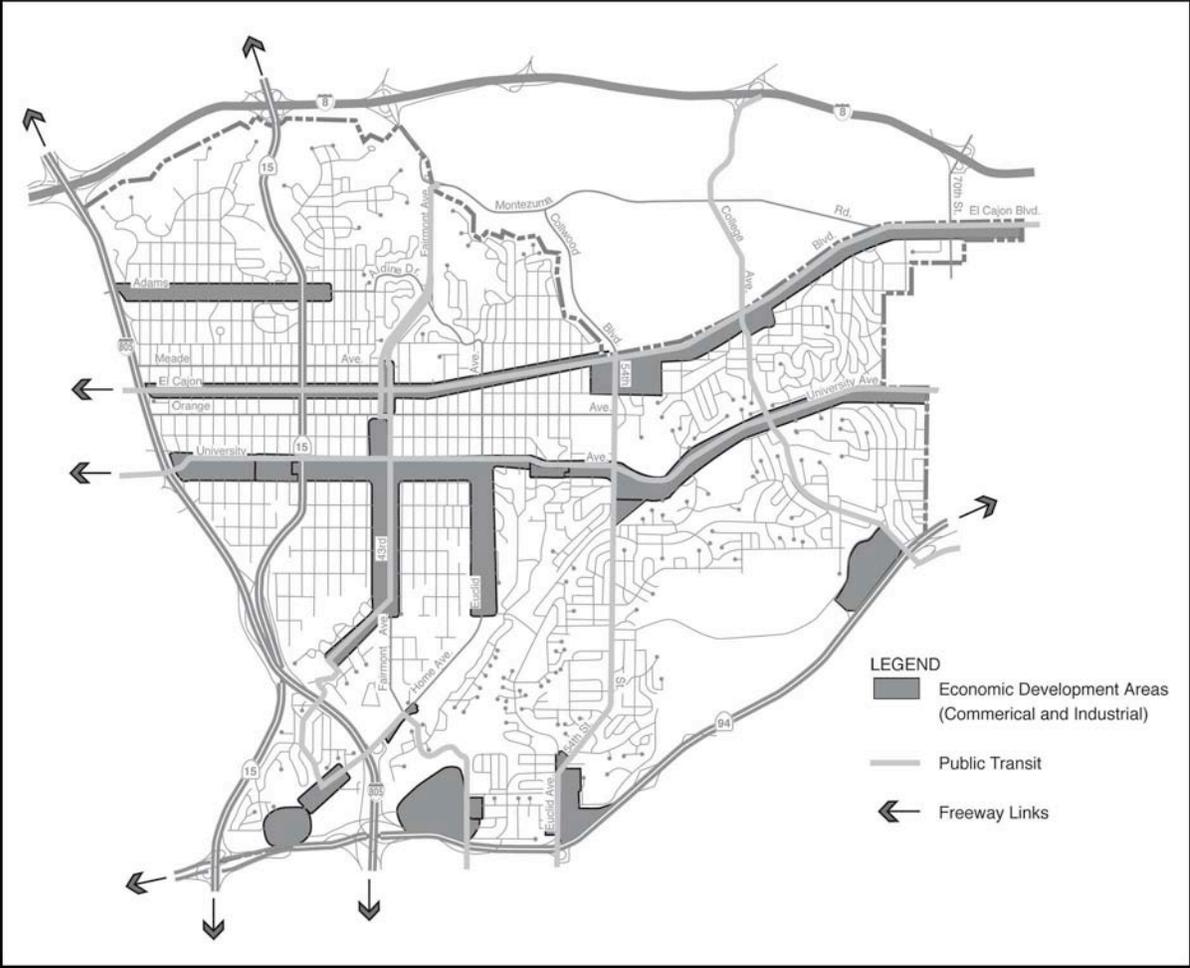
### **Goal**

- To enhance the image of the Mid-City communities as desirable locations for living, working and shopping.

### **Recommendations**

- Increase positive media exposure.
- Market Mid-City as a desirable alternative to distant suburbs.
- Widely publicize community fairs and festivals to showcase the assets of Mid-City.
- Take advantage of ethnic investment in the Mid-City area by promoting it as a theme. City Heights Village could be a focus for the celebration of ethnic festivities (e.g., Lunar New Year) and parades.

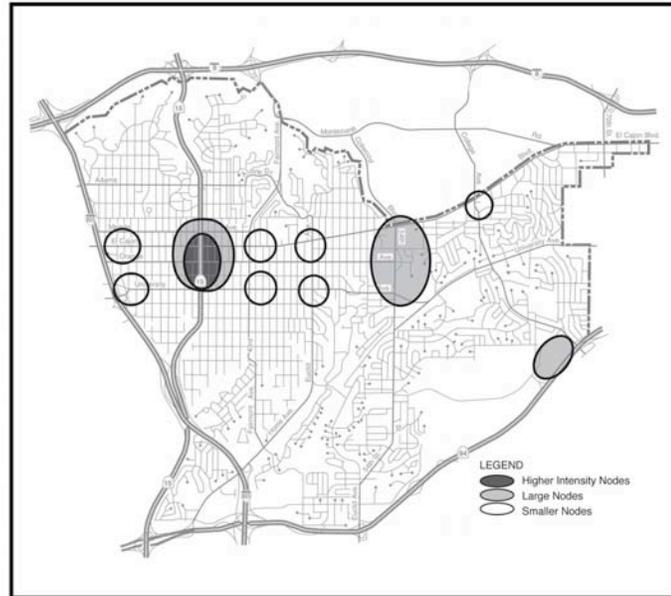
Figure 19  
Economic Development Element



## URBAN NODES

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Urban nodes area locations identified for higher-density mixed-use development. Urban nodes are designated at “Mid-City Center,” at the intersections of El Cajon Boulevard and State Route 15, and University Avenue and State Route 15, and the “Cultural Center” at the intersections of El Cajon Boulevard and 54<sup>th</sup> Street, and University Avenue and 54<sup>th</sup> Street.



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**Vision:** Urban nodes that have vitality, high quality design, a combination of uses, and are the places where community members interact.

---

### Mid-City Center

The completion of State Route 15 provides significant opportunities for new development, both from the perspective of land availability and improved regional accessibility. The nodes designated at the intersections of El Cajon Boulevard and State Route 15, and University Avenue and State Route 15, should be developed as transit-oriented town centers, accommodating the highest development densities in the Mid-City communities.

### **Goal**

- To establish a major urban center at these regional “crossroads.”

### **Recommendations**

- A major subregional transit station should be established.
- A large retail and office development, possibly hotels and theaters, should be promoted to take advantage of excellent regional vehicular access and transit.
- Selected light manufacturing activities should be accommodated.
- Major joint-use public facilities should be focused around these intersections.

- Building walls should be located at the property line. In those areas where the sidewalk is less than eight feet wide, pedestrian arcades along the street should be encouraged.
- Residential, office and hotel uses should be located on upper floors, taking advantage of views to the surrounding area.

### **The Cultural Center**

An urban node south of the intersection of 54<sup>th</sup> Street and El Cajon Boulevard designed to foster a concentration of institutional or “cultural” uses, providing convenient access to amenities such as schools, parks, medical facilities, community buildings and other uses that have a strong cultural component, and will help to strengthen links between Mid-City neighborhoods and San Diego State University.

#### **Goal**

- To provide convenient access to an expanded variety of “cultural” and institutional services and amenities and extend the benefits of proximity to a major urban university.

#### **Recommendations**

- Maintain and enhance the existing educational facilities.
- Market the adjacent commercial corridors for retail and commercial recreation facilities, including theaters, hotels, and art galleries.
- Encourage light manufacturing, emphasizing arts and crafts.
- Foster the rehabilitation and growth of existing health facilities.
- Foster development of moderate-density senior housing near health centers.
- Accentuate the rolling terrain by accommodating taller buildings on hilltops, thereby creating recognizable landmarks that provide orientation and identify this unique area.
- Create a park-like atmosphere around the perimeter of the node by enhancing visual access to Colina Del Sol Park and various school playgrounds.

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## **IV-F PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES ELEMENT**

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Among the most serious issues in Mid-City is the deficiency of public facilities, most notably schools and parks. This deficiency has become more critical with the infill development of apartments and condominiums, beginning in the 1960s and continuing to the present. While facility fees are now in place to partially mitigate the impact of new development, existing deficiencies in public facilities are not addressed by adopted financing mechanisms.

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**Schools**

**Parks**

**Libraries**

**Police and Public Safety**

**Fire and Life Safety**

**Community Service Center**

**Utilities**

**Water and Sewer**

## SCHOOLS

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In spite of the recent addition of two new schools, persistent enrollment growth in combination with older schools in Mid-City on extremely small sites continues to aggravate overcrowding in most schools (**Table 1**). Until new facilities are built, San Diego Unified School District is attempting to alleviate the overcrowding on an interim basis with portable classrooms, busing, modifying attendance boundaries, and the restructuring of grade levels. For planning purposes, it should be noted that the large number of students enrolled in local private schools, and public school students attending facilities outside the community through voluntary busing and choice, also serve as a relief valve.

With the recent addition of Rosa Parks Elementary School and Monroe-Clarke Middle School, public school facilities in Mid-City now include 16 elementary schools, three middle schools, and two high schools.

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**Vision:** School facilities serving as a focal point for the neighborhoods, providing a quality physical environment and a high standard of elementary and secondary education.

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### Goals

- To provide adequate school facilities for all residents of Mid-City, including the opportunity for those enrolled elsewhere to attend local public schools.
- To ensure that all existing and proposed school facilities meet the following enrollment standards:
  - Elementary Schools: 100 students per acre, or the design capacity of permanent structures on existing school sites (500 students per school preferred)
  - Middle Schools: 70 students per acre, or the design capacity of permanent structures on existing school sites (1,000 students per school preferred)
  - High Schools: 70 students per acre, or the design capacity of permanent structures on existing school sites (1,500 students per school preferred)
- To provide for the maximum utilization of school facilities during non-school hours for educational, cultural, recreational, and community support purposes.

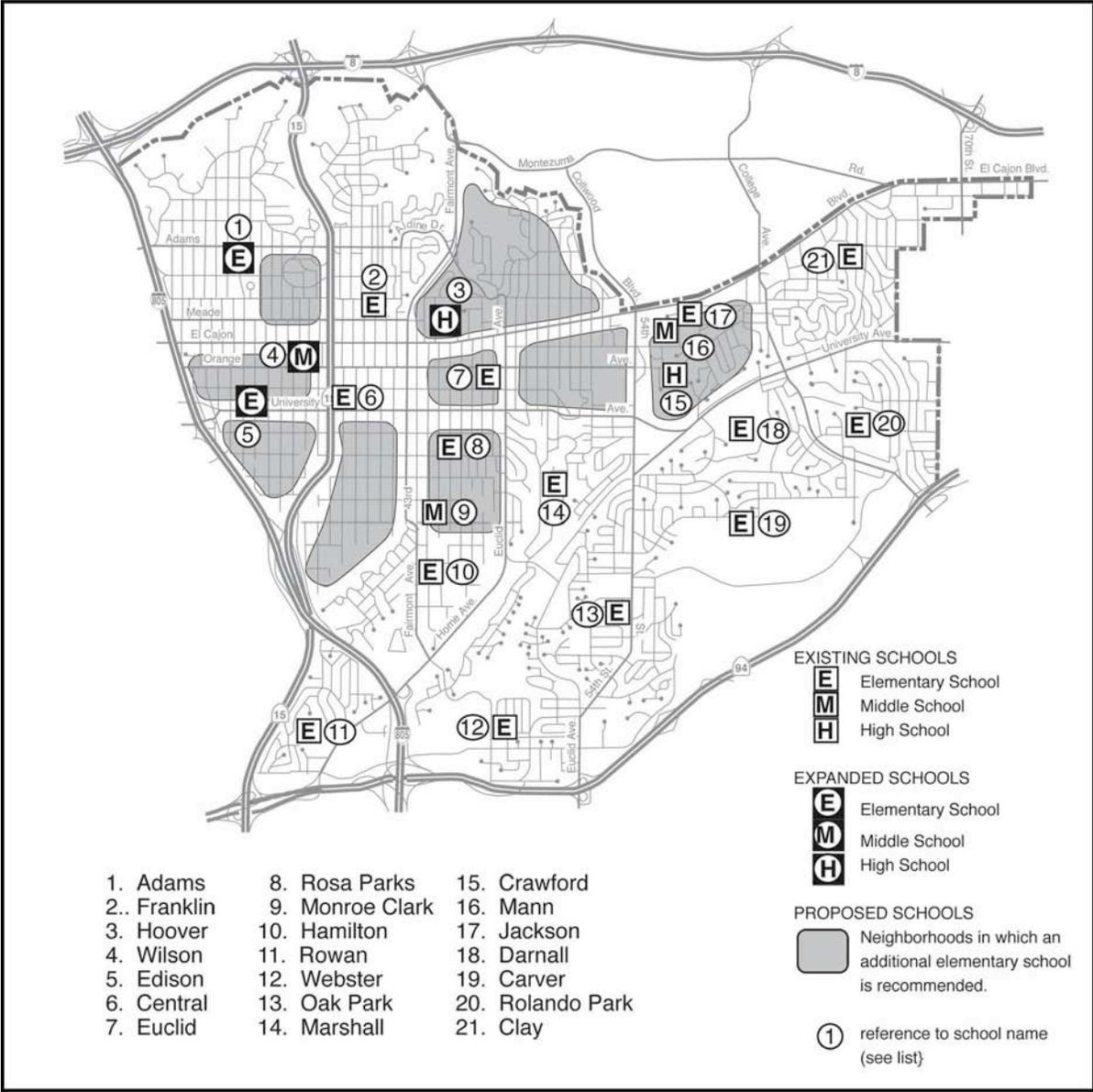
### Recommendations

- Coordinate with the San Diego Unified School District and the community to accomplish the following:
  - Ensure that adequate public facilities and infrastructure are in place, and compliance with maximum school enrollments achieved, prior to the construction of additional multifamily dwellings.
  - Expand existing school sites, as shown in **Figure 20**, and construct new elementary school facilities in the neighborhoods of Cherokee Park, Talmadge, Colina Park (two

elementary schools), Teralta East, Teralta West, Castle, Cherokee Point and El Cerrito Heights. The number of school sites needed may vary depending upon the extent to which existing school sites can be expanded and/or and restructured as twin schools.

- In the selection of sites for new elementary schools, consideration should be given to development of twin schools designed so that they provide functional flexibility in the grades taught. New School sites should avoid well-maintained single-family areas.
- Joint use of facilities by City and School District should be encouraged.
- Consideration should also be given to linkages between schools, other neighborhood facilities and activity centers, and natural amenities.
- Explore other options for the provision of needed educational facilities, including the establishment of charter schools, the involvement of the business community, and locating alternative resources
- Explore the establishment of a mutually beneficial teaching program in conjunction with San Diego State University, University of California - San Diego, and other advanced educational institutions.
- To leverage public investment in scarce land and facilities, implement the joint use of school facilities with other public and private interests, particularly libraries and parks and recreation facilities.
- Establish an ongoing school oversight committee to include representatives of the City Council, the School Board, and the community to coordinate the development, management, and maintenance of joint efforts.

**Figure 20**  
**Existing and Proposed Schools**



**TABLE 1  
SCHOOL ENROLLMENT**

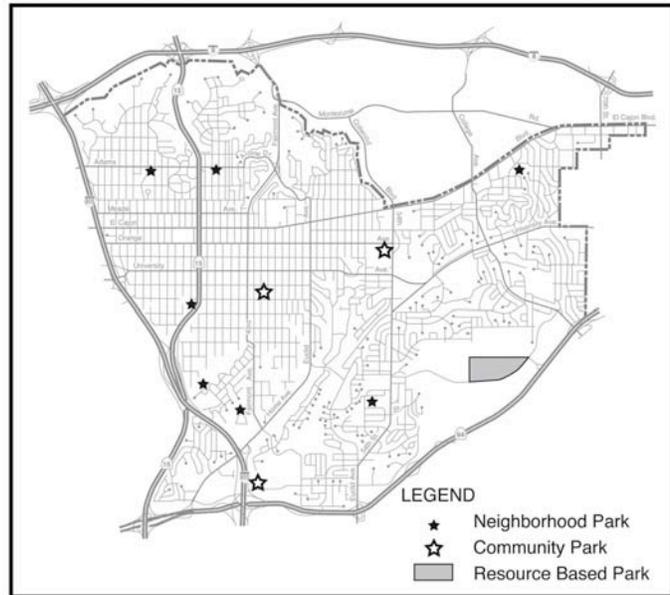
	Site Size (acres)	Enrollment			Students Per Acre (2000)	Percent of Site Capacity (see text)
		1980	1990	2000 (est.)		
<b>ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS</b>						
<b>(General Plan Standard: 10 acres, 500 students)</b>						
<b>CITY HEIGHTS</b>						
Central	4.43	616	1,049	1,331	300	300%
Edison	3.32	482	800	953	287	287%
Euclid	5.66	872	1,269	1,169	207	207%
Hamilton	6.70	528	1,202	1,227	183	183%
Marshall	7.05	457	822	818	116	116%
Rowan	6.80	244	319	330	49	49%
Rosa Parks	6.26	—	—	1,409	225	225%
<b>EASTERN AREA</b>						
Carver	8.91	221	382	568	64	64%
Clay	6.90	230	416	457	66	66%
Darnall	8.03	281	Closed	474	59	59%
Jackson	6.54	371	970	1,209	185	185%
Oak Park	7.61	564	758	769	101	101%
Rolando Park	11.52	355	371	350	30	30%
Webster	7.60	452	552	630	83	83%
<b>KENSINGTON-TALMADGE</b>						
Franklin	4.04	306	524	634	157	157%
<b>NORMAL HEIGHTS</b>						
Adams	4.64	819	773	939	202	202%
<b>MIDDLE SCHOOLS</b>						
<b>(General Plan Standard: 30 acres, 1,000 students)</b>						
<b>CITY HEIGHTS</b>						
Wilson	11.85	1,256	1,880	1,237	104	149%
Monroe Clark	12.42	—	—	1,641	132	189%
<b>EASTERN AREA</b>						
Mann	16.99	135	1,423	1,325	78	111%
<b>HIGH SCHOOLS</b>						
<b>(General Plan Standard: 45 acres, 1,500 students)</b>						
<b>KENSINGTON-TALMADGE</b>						
Hoover	24.91	1,244	2,032	2,070	83	119%
<b>EASTERN AREA</b>						
Crawford	26.91	1,532	1,561	1,924	71	102%

## PARKS

---

By current City of San Diego General Plan standards, the Mid-City is grossly deficient in park acreage. The most conspicuous needs are in the older neighborhoods, generally west of 54<sup>th</sup> Street. These same areas suffer from undersized, overcrowded school sites, limiting their use for recreational purposes.

There are currently seven neighborhood parks and three community parks within Mid-City. A number of pocket parks and mini-parks have been added to assist with the overall deficiencies. Joint use agreements for the use of school



grounds for park purposes, including the turfing of school play fields, has also helped to alleviate the deficiencies. City Heights Community Park has recently been expanded and improved in conjunction with the City Heights Urban Village Project, and design is underway for improvements in the undeveloped area of Chollas Park west of the lake.

---

**Vision:** A full range of park and recreation facilities and services convenient to all Mid-City residents and visitors.

---

### Goal

- To provide park facilities and services consistent with City of San Diego General Plan standards.

### Recommendations

- Provide new and expanded park facilities in accordance with the following standards:
  - One neighborhood park, of no less than ten acres, should be provided for every 5,000 residents; neighborhood parks should serve an area no greater than one-half mile in radius;
  - One community park, of no less than 20 acres in size, should be provided for every 25,000 residents; community parks should serve an area no greater than one and one-half mile in radius;
  - One resource-based park should be provided for the residents of Mid-City. By General Plan Standards, resource-based parks should be located at the site of

distinctive scenic or natural or cultural features. They are intended for citywide use. Size and development should be determined by the specific resource involved, expected use, available land, and location. **Table 2** summarizes existing and proposed park facilities.

- Provide mini-parks at scattered locations to help meet park standards. Such parks must be carefully designed and located to avoid negative impacts and to reflect the character, interests, and nature of the neighborhood. They should provide for a variety of uses and should allow for modification at a later date to reflect changing community needs. Locations adjacent to schools, community facilities, canyons, or in conjunction with redevelopment projects should be considered. Sites not meeting the above description should preferably be at a corner location. Multi-purpose mini-parks, perhaps including community gardens, should be a minimum of 15,000 square feet in size. Tot lots and other limited-use park areas may be a minimum of 5,000 square feet, subject to adequacy of access and security.
- Mini-parks should serve a population of 500 to 1,000 persons within an effective walking distance of one-quarter mile.
- Evaluate all vacant and publicly owned land, including streets and unimproved rights-of-way, for potential use as park or recreation facilities.
- Establish a new resource-based park system at the Chollas Reservoir linking to the Chollas Creek and other Mid-City canyon areas.
- Finalize and implement the improvement plans for North Chollas Lake Park west of the lake.
- Pursue joint use agreements for all public school sites, existing and proposed, to provide public recreational use of the facilities. High school campuses that typically do not have joint use agreements should remain open for public use during non-school hours.
- Fencing around school facilities should be designed to allow public access to the playground facilities during non-school hours while protecting school buildings from unwanted intrusions.

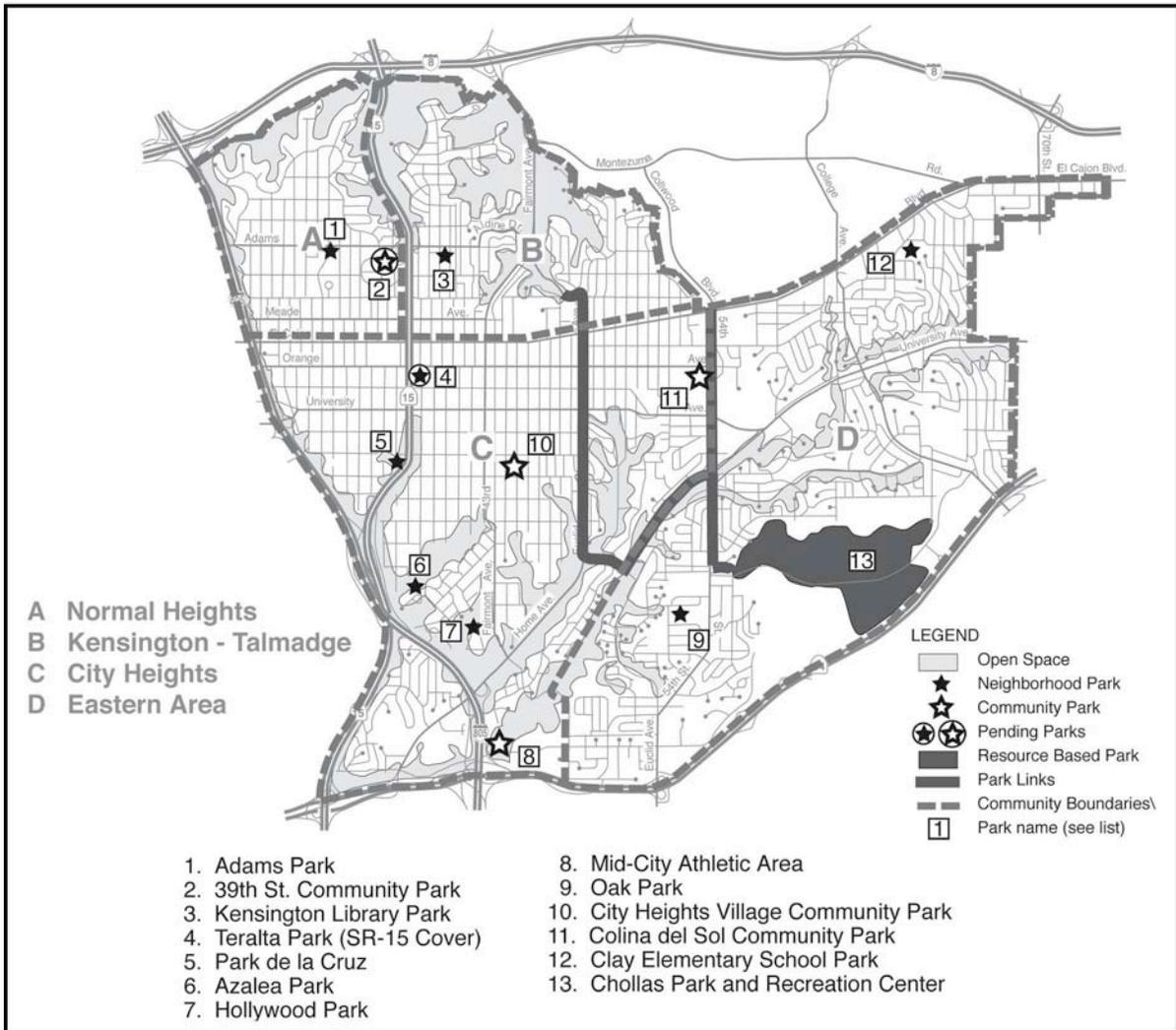
**TABLE 2  
ACREAGE OF PARK NEEDS**

	Existing/ Programmed (acres)	Proposed (acres)	General Plan Standard (acres)	Deficiency (acres)
<b>CITY HEIGHTS</b>				
<b><u>Mini-Parks</u></b>				
Central Elementary School	0.56	0.56		
City Heights (39 <sup>th</sup> Street)	0.32	0.32		
Edison Elementary	0.68	0.68		
Euclid	0.00	3.00		
Wabash (Wabash & University)	0.17	0.17		
Proposed	0.00	22.50		
<b><u>Neighborhood Parks</u></b>				
Azalea	9.00	9.00		
Hollywood	13.19	13.19		
Monroe Clark Middle School	0.00	4.00		
Park DeLa Cruz	6.93	12.00		
Rosa Parks Elementary School	2.30	2.30		
Teralta (SR-15 cover)	4.00	4.00		
Wilson Middle School	4.00	4.00		
Other Existing Schools (est.)	0.00	18.00		
Proposed Schools (est.)	<u>0.00</u>	<u>30.00</u>		
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>41.15</b>	<b>119.72</b>	<b>159.93</b>	<b>40.21</b>
<b><u>Community Parks</u></b>				
City Heights Village	6.93	6.93		
Colina Del Sol	33.84	33.84		
Fairmount Village	0.00	14.60		
Mid-City Athletic Area	<u>40.88</u>	<u>40.88</u>		
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b><u>81.65</u></b>	<b><u>96.25</u></b>	<b><u>63.97</u></b>	<b><u>-32.28</u></b>
<b>Total (City Heights)</b>	<b>122.80</b>	<b>215.97</b>	<b>223.90</b>	<b>7.93</b>
<b>EASTERN AREA</b>				
<b><u>Mini-Parks</u></b>				
East San Diego Adult Rec. Club	0.25	0.25		
Rolando	0.07	0.07		
Rolando Park School	0.06	0.06		
Proposed	0.00	9.50		
<b><u>Neighborhood Parks</u></b>				
50 <sup>th</sup> Street	0.00	0.66		
Clay Elementary School	2.30	2.30		
Clay Park	2.48	2.48		
Kalmia Street	0.00	8.20		
Mann Middle School	3.90	3.90		
Oak Park	3.46	3.46		
Other Existing Schools (est.)	0.00	18.00		
Proposed Schools (est.)	<u>0.00</u>	<u>5.00</u>		
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>12.52</b>	<b>53.88</b>	<b>64.31</b>	<b>10.43</b>

**TABLE 2  
ACREAGE OF PARK NEEDS (continued)**

	Existing/ Programmed (acres)	Proposed (acres)	General Plan Standard (acres)	Deficiency (acres)
<b><u>Community Parks</u></b>				
(see Resource-Based Parks below)	<u>0.00</u>	0.00		
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b><u>0.00</u></b>	<b><u>0.00</u></b>	<b><u>25.72</u></b>	<b><u>25.72</u></b>
<b>Total (Eastern)</b>	<b>12.52</b>	<b>53.88</b>	<b>9.03</b>	<b>36.15</b>
<b>KENSINGTON-TALMADGE</b>				
<b><u>Mini-Parks</u></b>				
Proposed	0.00	4.00		
<b><u>Neighborhood Parks</u></b>				
Franklin Elementary School	1.42	1.42		
Kensington Library	0.57	0.57		
Kensington-Talmadge Park	0.00	5.00		
Proposed Schools (est.)	<u>0.00</u>	<u>5.00</u>		
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>1.99</b>	<b>15.99</b>	<b>28.98</b>	<b>12.99</b>
<b><u>Community Parks</u></b>				
(none)	0.00	0.00		
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b><u>0.00</u></b>	<b><u>0.00</u></b>	<b><u>11.59</u></b>	<b><u>11.59</u></b>
<b>Total (Kensington-Talmadge)</b>	<b>1.99</b>	<b>15.99</b>	<b>40.57</b>	<b>24.58</b>
<b>NORMAL HEIGHTS</b>				
<b><u>Mini-Parks</u></b>				
Kenmore Terrace	0.16	0.16		
North Mountain View	0.25	0.25		
Proposed	0.00	5.00		
<b><u>Neighborhood Parks</u></b>				
34 <sup>th</sup> Street	0.05	5.10		
40 <sup>th</sup> Street (est.)	0.00	5.00		
Adams Park	1.47	6.50		
Adams Elementary School	2.13	2.13		
Proposed Schools (est.)	<u>0.00</u>	<u>5.00</u>		
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>4.06</b>	<b>29.14</b>	<b>34.28</b>	<b>5.14</b>
<b><u>Community Parks</u></b>				
39 <sup>th</sup> Street	<u>4.00</u>	<u>9.00</u>		
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b><u>4.00</u></b>	<b><u>9.00</u></b>	<b><u>13.71</u></b>	<b><u>4.71</u></b>
<b>Total (Normal Heights)</b>	<b>8.06</b>	<b>38.14</b>	<b>47.99</b>	<b>9.85</b>
<b>TOTAL (MID-CITY)</b>				
<b><u>Mini/Neighborhood/Community Parks</u></b>				
Chollas Lake Park System	145.37	323.98	402.49	78.51
<b><u>Resource-Based Parks</u></b>				
Chollas Lake Park System	<u>134.06</u>	<u>187.18</u>		
	<b>146.06</b>	<b>282.18</b>	<b>2,156.19</b>	<b>1,874.01</b>

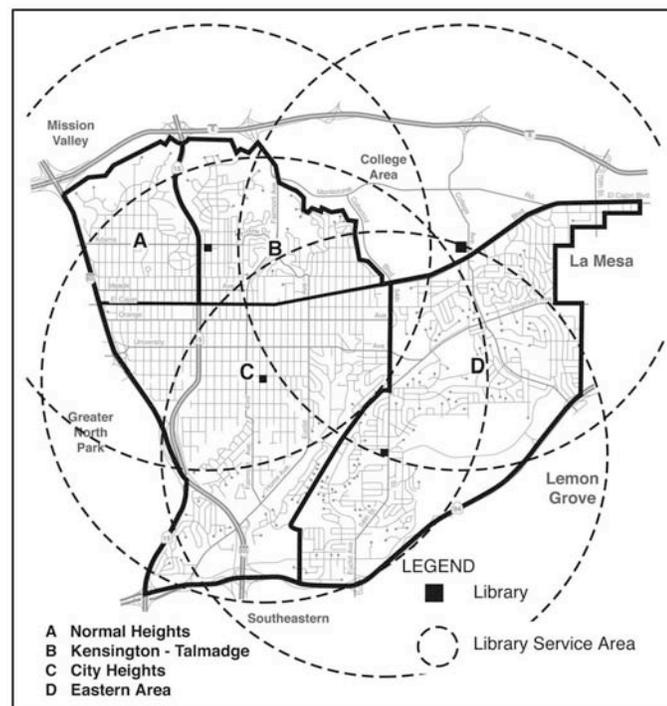
**Figure 21  
Park Recommendations**



## LIBRARIES

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There are currently branch libraries in Kensington, Oak Park, and the recently expanded and relocated City Heights branch. General Plan standards call for a minimum of one branch library per 30,000 residents, with a typical size of 10,000 to 15,000 square feet. Given Mid-City's 1990 population of 132,466, and considering the small size of the existing facilities, the expansion of at least one of the three existing branches is needed, along with the addition of a fourth branch.



---

**Vision:** A high level of library service providing residents with a convenient, comprehensive selection of printed and electronic resources.

---

### Goal

- To provide additional facilities and services to meet General Plan standards.

### Recommendations

- Expand library facilities as shown in **Table 3**.
- Maintain the Kensington-Normal Heights Library at its central location in Kensington and expand at that site to the extent feasible without significantly impacting the surrounding park. In spite of its substandard size by General Plan standards, this branch should remain open after the addition of the Normal Heights branch due to Mid-City's high-density, overcrowded schools, and inadequate parks. This branch also has a high level of pedestrian access and strong neighborhood support both in volunteers and private funding. Due to its size constraints, consideration may be given to adding unique library services at this facility.
- Provide an additional branch library in Normal Heights or the northern area of City Heights. The location and size of the facility should be planned in conjunction with the

potential for expansion of the Kensington branch, so that the two libraries together adequately serve the western and central portion of the Mid-City community.

- Expand the Oak Park Library to meet General Plan standards.

**TABLE 3  
LIBRARY NEEDS**

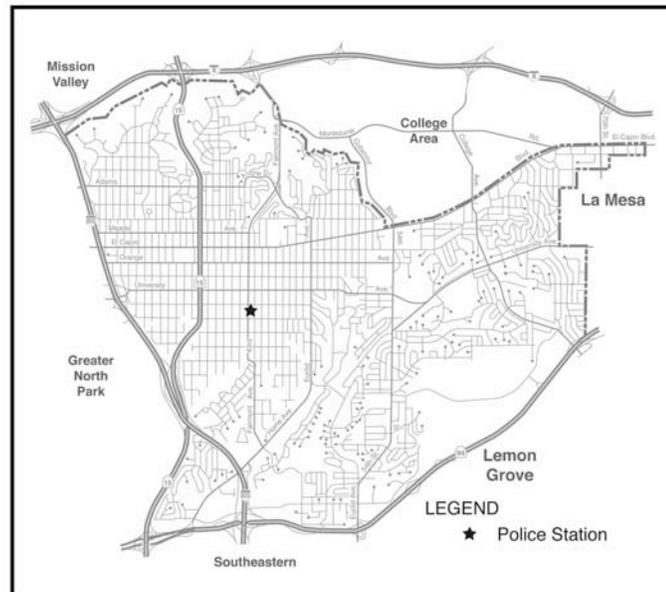
	<b>Existing Facilities (square feet)</b>	<b>Proposed Facilities (square feet)</b>
Normal Heights	—	15,000
Kensington/Talmadge	2,318	5,000
City Heights	15,000	15,000
Eastern Area (Oak Park)	5,200	15,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>22,518</b>	<b>50,000</b>

## POLICE AND PUBLIC SAFETY

---

The Mid-City Police Substation recently opened in City Heights, adding to Mid-City's two police storefronts and several neighborhood satellite offices.

Police officers are involved in community projects such as environmental design to help make neighborhoods safer, security conferences, a prostitution task force, community forums to diffuse racial tensions, and juvenile programs. Ongoing neighborhood watch programs are also helping to reduce what had become a serious crime problem in some Mid-City neighborhoods.



---

**Vision:** A community where residents and visitors are safe and can feel secure in their everyday activities.

---

### Goal

- To reduce criminal activity significantly, especially violent crimes, to below the City average.

### Recommendations

- Maintain a high level of police presence, including the expansion of foot patrols.
- Extend Neighborhood Watch activities to all areas.
- Establish additional satellite and storefront locations to better understand and serve the changing populations of Mid-City.
- Continue conversion of “yellow” (low-pressure sodium) streetlights to “white” (white low-energy consumption street lighting).
- Expand opportunities for citizen participation in the improvement of neighborhood security.

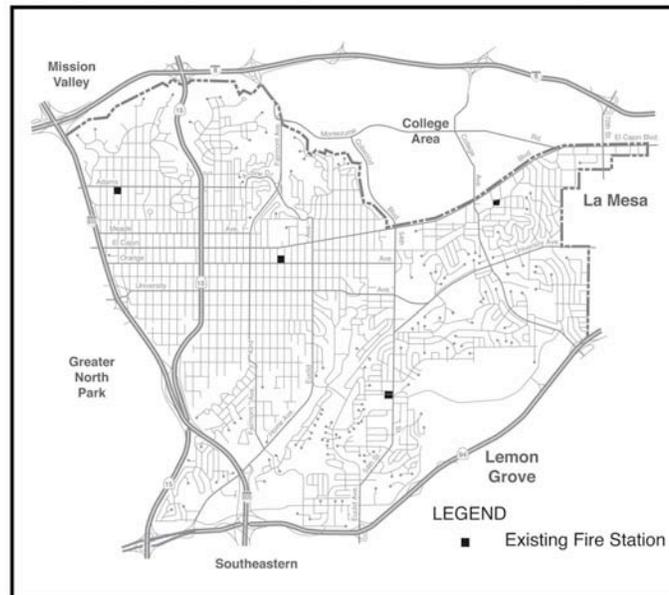
## FIRE AND LIFE SAFETY

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There are four fire stations serving Mid-City:

- Station 10 in Rolando at 4605 62<sup>nd</sup> Street;
- Station 17 in City Heights at 4206 Chamoune Avenue;
- Station 18 in Normal Heights at 4676 Felton Street; and
- Station 26 in Oak Park at 2850 54<sup>th</sup> Street

There are four additional stations near Mid-City to the west and south. Response time for all four Mid-City stations is less than eight minutes for 85 percent of fire engine responses and twelve minutes for 94 percent of paramedic ambulances. The City performance measures are for the Fire Department to arrive at non-medical incidents within an average time of six minutes and for medical emergencies within eight minutes 90 percent of the time. Neither of these performance measures is being met at this time.



---

**Vision:** A high level of fire protection and life safety services.

---

### Goals

- To achieve and maintain a high level of fire and life safety services throughout the community.
- To eliminate fire dangers, particularly in canyon areas.

### Recommendations

- Provide fire prevention programs at all Mid-City schools.
- Enforce weed and litter abatement and brush management on vacant lots and canyons.
- Upgrade facilities for fire and life safety as needed.
- Continue to monitor water pressure and upgrade as needed.

## COMMUNITY SERVICE CENTER

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Community Service Centers provide convenient location for residents to obtain a variety of City services, and support other neighborhood programs, including meeting space for community groups.

The Mid-City Community Service Center will be located in the City Heights Urban Village. Another Community Service Center, serving the eastern neighborhoods, is located at 2850 54<sup>th</sup> Street.

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**Vision:** A centrally located civic center facility providing all needed City-related services.

---

### Goal

- To determine and provide as many needed services as feasible.

### Recommendations

- A new Community Service Center should be established to serve the Eastern Area. The Oak Park Branch Library should be considered as a location if the library is relocated.
- Monitor community needs and adjust services as appropriate.
- Community Service Center activities should be coordinated and, to the extent possible, co-located with the offices of other public agencies active in the Mid-City.

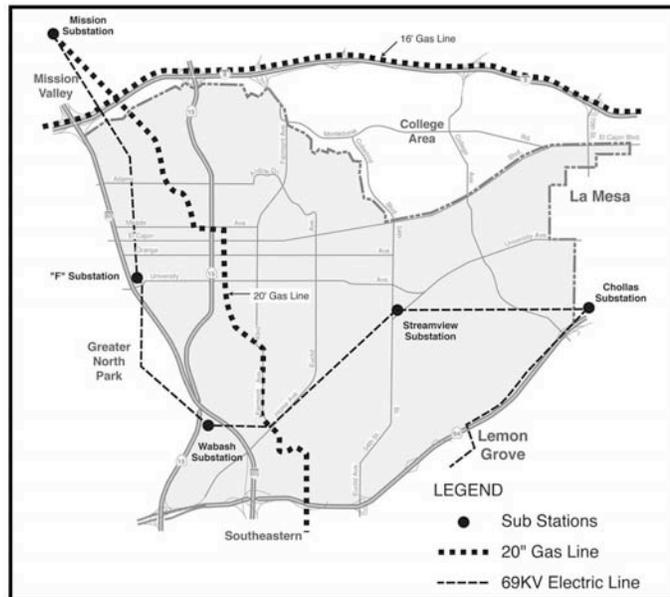
## UTILITIES

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Deregulation of the public utilities industry has introduced competition in the provision of telephone, gas and electricity services.

Existing gas and electric distribution facilities include three electric distribution substations, two gas transmission mains, and several major electric transmission lines.

Local telephone infrastructure includes three wire centers. Expanding wireless telephone service providers continue to develop analog and digital wireless transmission infrastructure.



Undergrounding of electrical distribution lines and telephone lines along major streets is jointly financed by the City and SDG&E. Priorities for undergrounding are based upon amount of traffic, congestion of wires, and major scenic routes. Mid-City streets currently programmed for undergrounding include the City Heights Urban Village project and portions of College Grove Drive, Fairmount Avenue, and Federal Boulevard.

---

**Vision:** A continued high level of service from facilities which are compatible with surrounding development.

---

### Goal

- To provide adequate and reliable utility service while ensuring that public utilities facilities are not disruptive to the community.

### Recommendations

- Consider impacts of energy and communication facilities on adjacent uses.
- Continue the undergrounding of overhead lines. Establish guidelines for the timely removal of utility poles once underground facilities are in place.
- Use all available means to conceal communication antennas from view.
- Co-locate public utility infrastructure to the maximum extent possible.

- Provide SDG&E, the City, and the community the opportunity to review projects that may impact SDG&E facilities, including drainage impacts and encroachment on rights-of-way, to identify and resolve potential conflicts.
- Establish a project review process whereby the community and all agencies responsible for the development and maintenance of facilities in, or beneath, the public right-of-way have the opportunity to coordinate activities and identify and resolve potential conflicts.
- Establish fiber-optic and cable services for digital networks.

## **WATER AND SEWER**

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Water and sewer facilities west of 54<sup>th</sup> Street were built in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and are becoming obsolete. Blockages and breaks are aggravated by inadequate slopes, inhibiting efficient drainage. Sewer lines and water mains in the Eastern Area are considered adequate, although low water pressure is frequently reported in the neighborhoods south of University Avenue. A main replacement program which will improve water pressure and reliability of service in Mid-City is currently underway.

---

**Vision:** Consistent and adequate water and sewer service.

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### **Goal**

- To provide a water and sewer system that has been upgraded to meet current standards.

### **Recommendations**

- Aggressively pursue the main replacement program.
- Upgrade and make corrections to address existing problems of low water pressure.
- Address recurrent roadway flooding problems by improving surface and/or subsurface drainage facilities.

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## **IV-G TRANSPORTATION ELEMENT**

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The transportation network of Mid-City consists of vehicular, bicycle, pedestrian and mass transit components. The transportation network services the internal community with links to the adjacent communities, and the regional freeway system.

Since the adoption of the last community plan in December of 1984, the Mid-City community has experienced many changes in traffic and transportation characteristics. The construction of SR-15 in particular will result in significant changes to traffic circulation and improvements to transit access.

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**Traffic Circulation**

**Parking**

**Mass Transit**

**Bikeways**

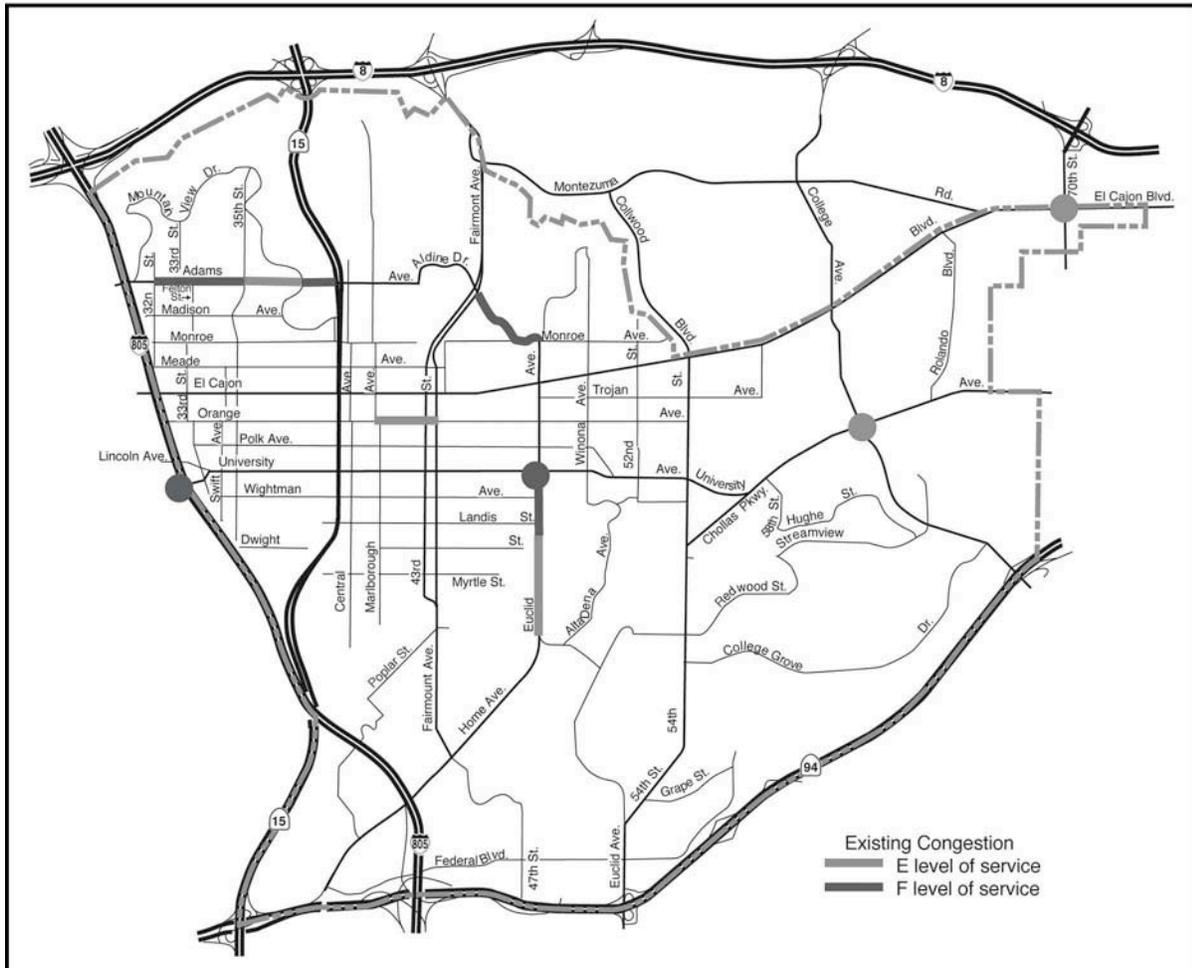
**Pedestrian Circulation**

**Bikeways**



Figure 23

## Existing Congested Street Segments and Intersections



## INTERSECTIONS

Traffic signals are devices that assign right-of-way for the orderly movement of motorists and pedestrians, increase traffic handling capacity of an intersection, reduce the frequency of certain types of accidents, and can be used to stop the heavy traffic at specified intervals to allow other vehicular and pedestrian traffic to enter the intersection. In addition, under favorable conditions, traffic signals may be coordinated to provide a more efficient continuous traffic movement along a street.

Intersection conditions are measured by the concept of "level of service" (LOS) which is a qualitative measure describing operating conditions within a traffic stream and their perception by the motorists. They are ranked from "A" to "F" with level "A" representing the best operating conditions and level of service "F" the worst. In urbanized areas of this City such as the Mid-City Community Planning area levels of service E and F are considered congested and are undesirable.

The intersections shown below presently have a level of service (LOS) D or worse during the PM peak hour.

- University Avenue and College Avenue (LOS: E)
- El Cajon Boulevard and 70<sup>th</sup> Street (LOS: E)
- University Avenue and Euclid Avenue (LOS: F)
- University Avenue and Boundary Street (LOS: F)

The intersections that have LOS E or F are considered congested and undesirable. **Figure 23** depicts the existing congested intersections in Mid-City.

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**Vision:** A functioning multi-modal transportation system that connects to the larger regional system and a sensible traffic plan that enhances neighborhood quality and cohesiveness.

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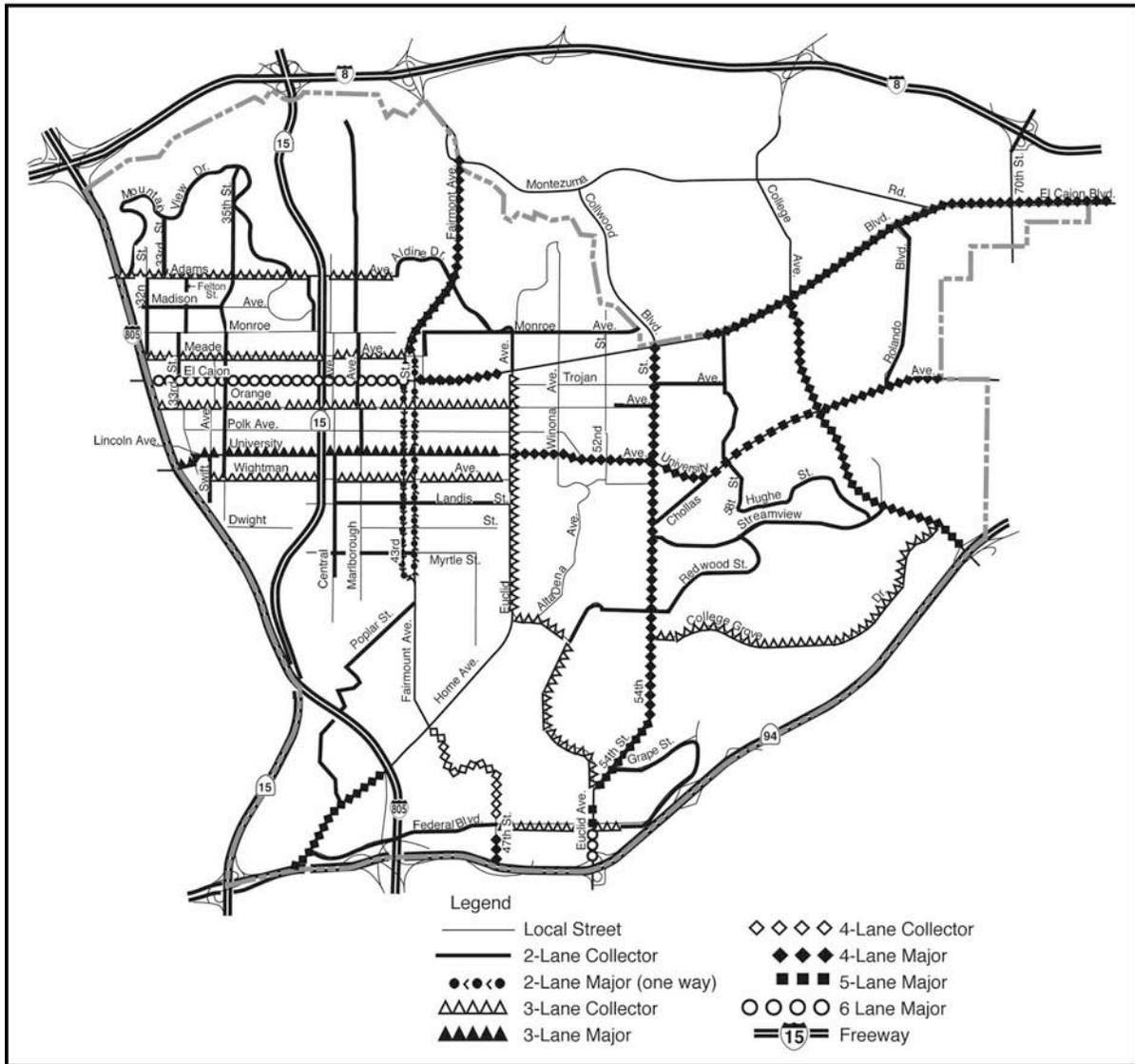
## **FUTURE CONDITIONS**

In order to analyze future traffic, two sets of capacity analysis were conducted:

1. Street segment capacity analysis
2. Intersection capacity analysis

The future daily traffic volumes for each street network alternatives were compared to the carrying capacities of the adopted community plan street classifications based on the City's level of service criteria for street segments. For urbanized areas of the City, including the Mid-City Community Plan area, street segments with levels of service worse than D (i.e., E and F) are considered congested and undesirable.

Figure 24  
 Future Recommended Street Network



### Streets and Highways

With the exception of State Route 15, which is to be completed, the existing system should be maintained and operational improvements made. Recommendations are based on a proven need to increase efficiency and accommodate planned growth.

The recommended future street network is shown on **Figure 24**. The future daily volumes are shown on **Figure 25**.

## **Goal**

- To provide an adequate traffic circulation system that is balanced with the character and multi-modal tendencies of the community.

## **Recommendations**

Recommended transportation improvements are shown on **Figure 26**.

### **33<sup>rd</sup> Street**

- Upgrade to a two-lane collector street between North Mountain View Drive and Adams Avenue.
- Upgrade to a two-lane collector street between El Cajon Boulevard and Monroe Avenue.

### **40<sup>th</sup> Street**

- Downgrade to a two-lane collector street between North Mountain View Drive and Adams Avenue.
- Terminate at intersection with Monroe Avenue and vacate between Monroe Avenue and Meade Avenue when feasible.

### **43<sup>rd</sup> Street**

- Maintain as a two-lane collector street one-way southbound.

### **Chollas Parkway**

- Reduce width to a two-lane collector street between 54<sup>th</sup> Street and University Avenue. As an alternative, consider closing all or part of Chollas Parkway between 54<sup>th</sup> Street and University Avenue, possibly using Lea Street as the connection between 54<sup>th</sup> Street and Chollas Parkway east of Lea Street. This closure would be subject to environmental review and a traffic analysis of the impact on the 54<sup>th</sup> Street and University Avenue intersection and the implementation of any needed improvements as a condition of that closure.

Note: This recommendation was not reviewed by the Planning Commission

### **College Grove Drive**

- Reduce width to a three-lane collector street (one lane in each direction with a continuous center left-turn lane) between 54<sup>th</sup> Street and College Grove Way.

### **College Grove Way**

- Work with Caltrans on the proposed eastbound on- and off-ramps from SR-94 to College Grove Drive as recommended in the College Grove Redevelopment Area Plan.



## Home Avenue

- Widen to a four-lane collector street between Euclid Avenue and Fairmount Avenue as adjacent properties develop.
- Improve the median and length of left-turn pockets between 54<sup>th</sup> Street and Federal Boulevard.

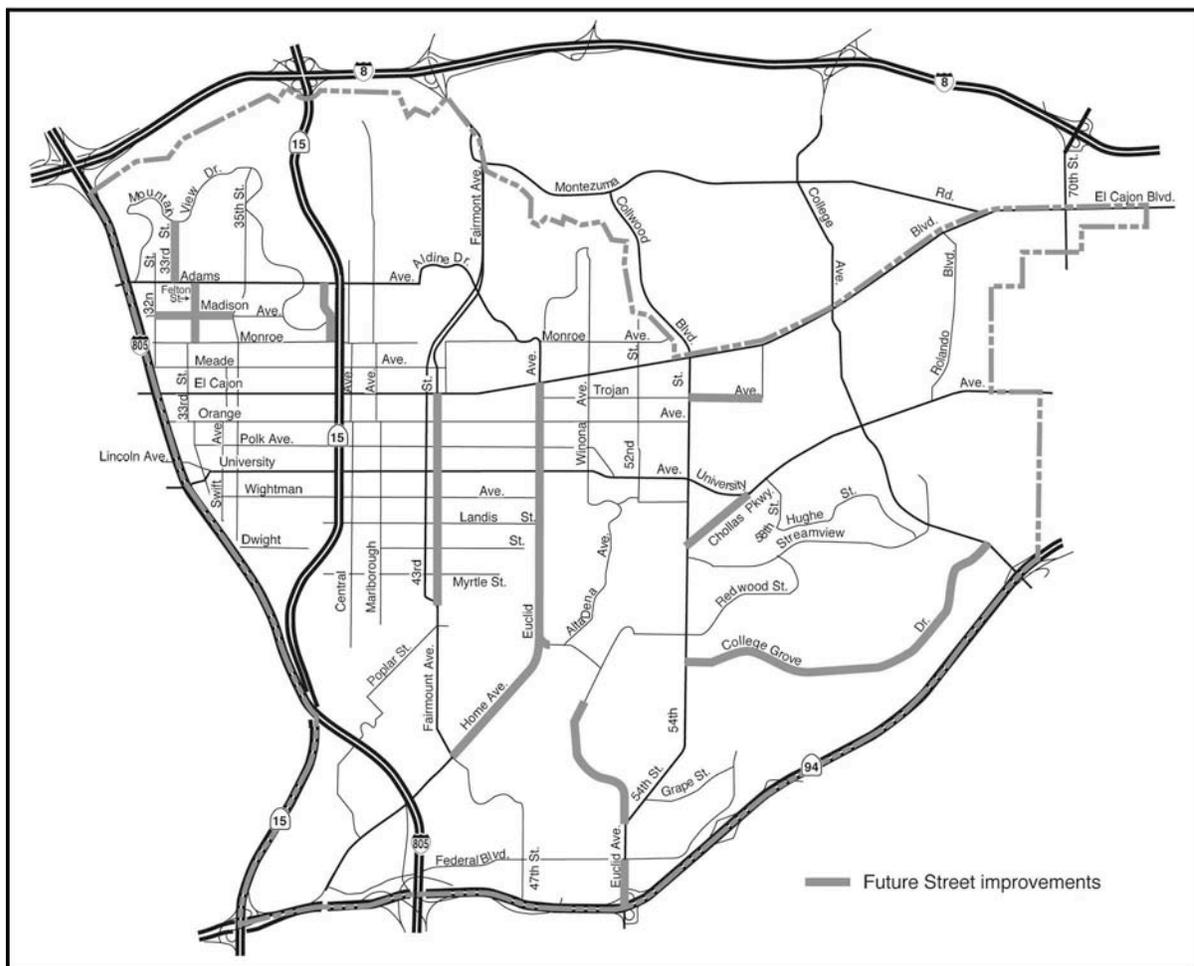
## Hughes Street

- Identify as a two-lane collector street between 58<sup>th</sup> Street and Streamview Drive.

## Madison Avenue

- Upgrade to a two-lane collector street between I-805 On-Ramp to 35<sup>th</sup> Street.

**Figure 26**  
**Transportation Improvements**



### **University Avenue**

- Maintain University Avenue as a three-lane major street between I-805 and Euclid Avenue.

Other additional roadway improvements may be necessary to reduce congestion as shown on **Figure 27**.

### **INTERSECTIONS**

Required intersection improvements to bring intersection levels of service to D or better are as follows:

#### **Federal Boulevard/Euclid Avenue**

- Widen southbound Euclid Avenue to provide one left-turn, two through, and a shared right and through lane. Widen eastbound Federal Boulevard to provide two left-turn, one through, and one shared right and through lane.

#### **I-805 Southbound On-Off Ramps/Home Avenue**

- Widen westbound approach (Home Avenue) by narrowing and relocating the median, to provide two left-turn and two existing through lanes.

#### **El Cajon Boulevard/70<sup>th</sup> Street**

- Widen El Cajon Boulevard to provide two eastbound left-turn lanes.

#### **University Avenue/Euclid Avenue**

- Widen eastbound University Avenue to provide one left-turn, two through, and one right-turn lane as redevelopment occurs.
- There should be no narrowing of sidewalks. Widen northbound Euclid Avenue to provide one left-turn, one through, and one right-turn lane.

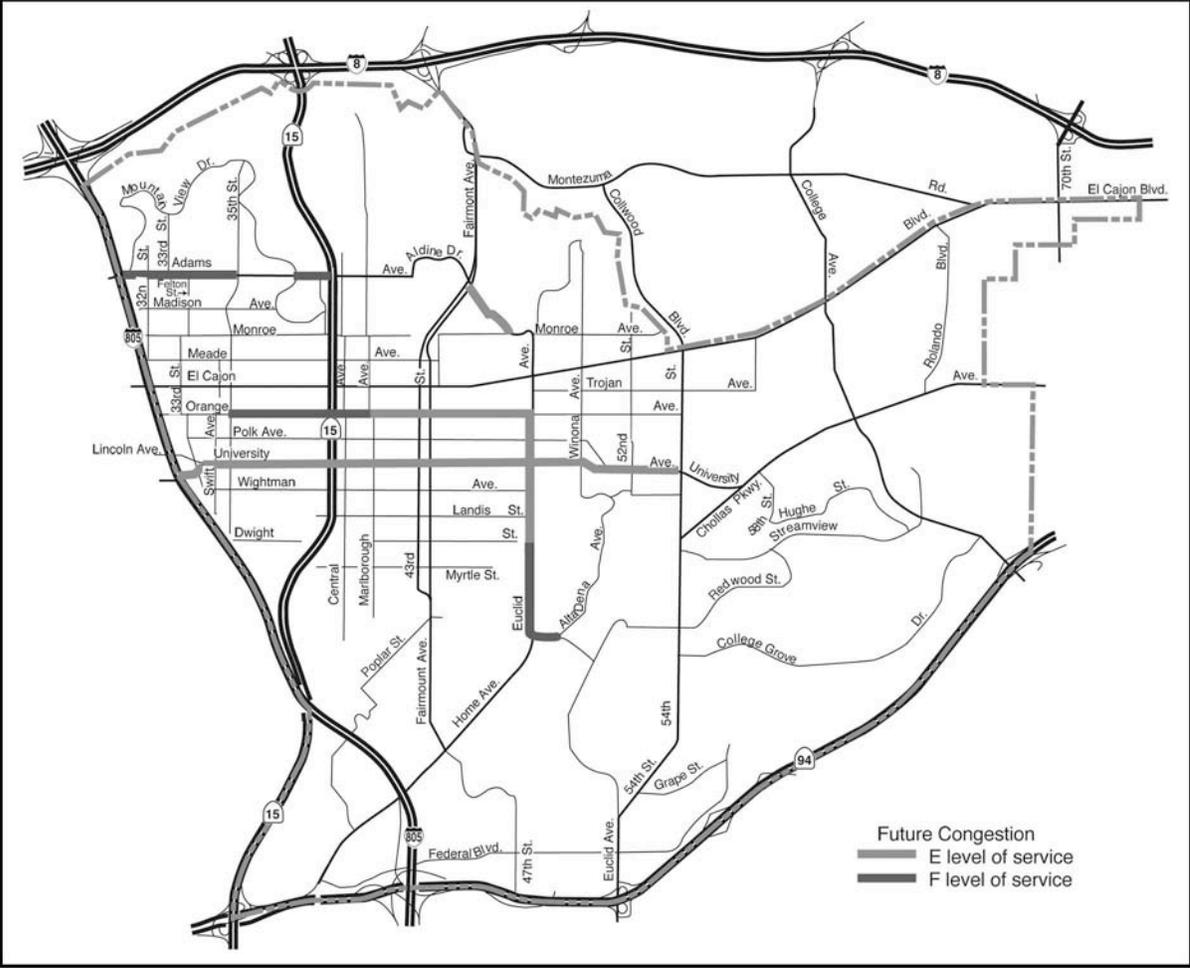
#### **University Avenue/Boundary Street**

- Widen the northbound Boundary Street to provide one left-turn lane, one through lane and one right-turn lane.

### **FUTURE CONGESTION**

At the buildout of the community, after implementation of the plan recommendations, several streets would still operate at levels of service E and F, as shown on **Figure 27**.

Figure 27  
Future Congestion



## **PARKING**

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As a result of historical development patterns, changed demographics and current parking needs, the Mid-City community faces problems with the quantity, location and safety of its existing parking supply. The older, predominantly single-family areas were developed with parking standards that were appropriate for the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century, but do not meet current demands, even in areas that have remained single-family neighborhoods.

Furthermore, the widespread introduction of multifamily development in single-family dwelling neighborhoods and increases in the average number of residents per multifamily dwelling unit exacerbated the already insufficient supply of parking.

Although commercial areas have an adequate supply of parking, its location and configuration is unsuited to the needs of current businesses. Moreover, security is compromised by large, empty areas devoid of activity in the evening and off-peak hours.

---

**Vision:** Adequate, appropriately located and safe parking to service Mid-City.

---

### **Goal**

- To provide parking that is adequate for its intended use, but that does not produce negative impacts on community character by providing an oversupply of parking.

### **Recommendations**

- The character and viability of commercial development should be considered in the development and application of parking requirements.
- Locate parking so as to minimize impacts on pedestrians.
- Encourage opportunities to share parking among various uses.
- Pursue the establishment of parking districts to provide public parking facilities and services, financed by such devices as in-lieu fees, parking meters and parking permits.
- Where private off-street parking is inadequate, consider the provision of diagonal on-street parking to increase the total supply of parking spaces.
- Locate larger parking areas strategically in relation to transit stops to enhance transit usage.

# MASS TRANSIT

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## BACKGROUND

The San Diego Metropolitan Transit System (MTS) operates the system of buses and the trolley or Light Rail Transit (LRT). They are overseen by the Metropolitan Transit Development Board (MTDB).

The Mid-City community is considered a high-density population center. Many major activity centers are located nearby, including Centre City, Balboa Park, Qualcomm Stadium, Mission Valley, and San Diego State University. A large percentage of the Mid-City population is transit-dependent, especially senior citizens and low-income residents. This is especially true in the higher population density areas, where up to 24 percent of households are without a vehicle compared to ten percent citywide, and over ten percent use transit to get to work, versus four percent citywide.

Public transit is presently provided at levels equivalent to or better than elsewhere in the City.

---

**Vision:** An efficient transit system that features fixed rail, electric buses and intracommunity shuttles.

---

## BUS

Mid-City has a very high level of bus transit service as shown on **Figure 28**. Bus service is provided on three major east-west corridors: El Cajon Boulevard, University Avenue, and Adams Street. North-south service is provided on: Fairmount Avenue, 54<sup>th</sup> Street, and College Avenue.

## RAIL

Fixed rail transit has been studied in the past for El Cajon Boulevard and has not been found to be viable.

## Goals

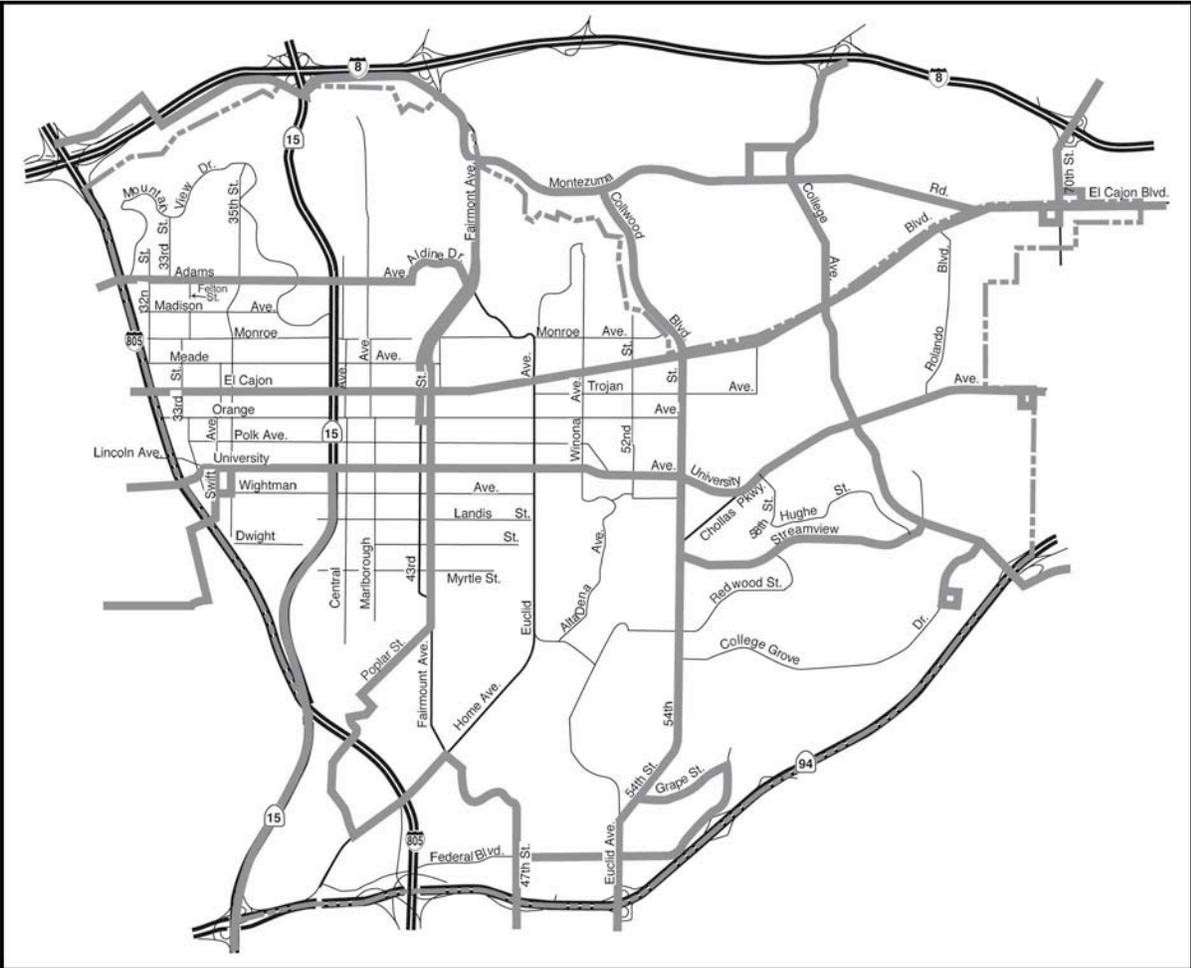
- To provide accessible public transit service for all residents, employees, shoppers and visitors to Mid-City.
- To provide a high level of public transit service along major corridors.
- To provide direct public transit access to major regional employment centers.

## Recommendations

- Provide fixed rail transit on I-15 as soon as possible (currently under study by MTDB).

- Reevaluate the feasibility of a fixed rail transit corridor along El Cajon Boulevard or adjacent east-west streets.
- Consider the expansion of express bus service in Mid-City, linking the population centers to major activity centers in San Diego.
- Enhance existing urban level bus service to the extent possible by increasing the frequency of service, adding express service, reducing headway between buses, allowing buses to preempt traffic signals, and improving transit stops and surfacing of streets along bus routes.
- Consider the feasibility of restoring the fixed rail service on University Avenue between I-805 and Euclid Avenue, or provide a “rubber tire trolley” service.
- Provide bus shelters on all transit corridors.
- As a major north-south transit route, there should be no reduction in service along 54<sup>th</sup> Street.

**Figure 28  
Bus Routes**



# PEDESTRIAN CIRCULATION

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## BACKGROUND

The density and mixture of land uses put residents in close proximity to multiple destinations, allowing walking to be a significant mode of transportation. Pedestrian activity also contributes to the viability of public transit in Mid-City.

Pedestrian travel is accommodated by a sidewalk system along most streets in the community.

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**Vision:** Encourage and enhance pedestrian and bicycling as effective modes of personal transportation.

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## Goal

- To provide adequate sidewalks and paths.

## Recommendations

- Sidewalks should be provided along all street frontages except in steep hillside areas where there is no access to adjoining properties.
- Sidewalks in commercial areas should be paved to the curb with trees spaced along the curb, and extend from the curb to the property line, generally ten feet to 14 feet wide.
- Sidewalks that are replaced in residential areas should maintain the same location with respect to the curb.
- Sidewalks should not be reduced in width through street widening, encroachments, or by other means.
- Provide a sidewalk on the Euclid Avenue bridge over Chollas Creek.
- Cover the curb returns at the drainage channel outlets on Chollas Road and Chollas Parkway.
- All sidewalks with high pedestrian usage should be lighted with pedestrian-oriented streetlights.
- Provide adequate security for pedestrians with lighting and design of landscaped walkways to ensure visibility.
- Street trees should provide maximum shade and be equally spaced.
- Closing streets is discouraged. If a street is closed, to the extent possible, pedestrian and bicycle access should be maintained.
- Garages should face alleys where available or should be set back from the front of the principal structure.
- Private streets and gated developments are discouraged.

- Provide direct pedestrian access from sidewalks to storefronts and residential units where feasible.
- Provide a pedestrian orientation in commercial areas with storefronts and display windows close to sidewalk.
- To the extent possible, encourage implementation of traffic calming programs to reduce vehicle speeds through residential neighborhoods.
- Systematically upgrade deteriorating sidewalks, curbs, and gutters.
- Historic scoring patterns and ID stamps should be retained or duplicated when sidewalks are replaced.

## **BICYCLE SYSTEM**

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The existing and proposed bicycle system within the Mid-City Community Plan area is shown in **Figure 29**.

The City has three classifications of bikeways.

The bikeway types and bicycle facilities classifications are shown in **Appendix B**. The pedestrian/bikeway bridge over SR-15 at Monroe Avenue should be a minimum of 12 feet wide.



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## **V. IMPLEMENTATION**

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Several significant short- and long-term efforts are necessary to ensure implementation of this community plan. These will involve continuing commitment on the part of the City, other governmental agencies, local residents and businesses to enhance and market the Mid-City communities as dynamic 21<sup>st</sup> Century models. Significant public investments will be required to correct existing public facility deficiencies, and major new funding resources must be sought and created to make up for the present financial shortfall. In addition, regulatory changes will be needed to stabilize neighborhoods and balance population-to-public resource availability, building on existing positive features of the communities.

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**Monitoring**

**Development Regulations**

**Public Transit**

**Financing Plan**

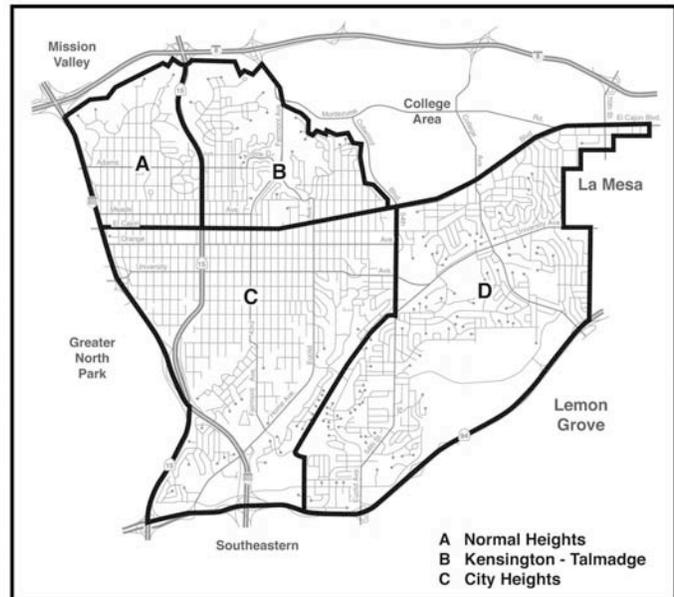
**Redevelopment**

**Revitalization**

## BACKGROUND

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Mid-City has historically had a shortage of public facilities, especially schools, parks, libraries, and regional transit. This shortage has been exacerbated by high levels of growth in the 1970s and 1980s, prompting the community to initiate this Plan update effort. The challenge is to stabilize growth in both the short-term and long-term to the point that facility needs can be fully addressed. The result can be a community that is very desirable to live in and in which to do business, a community that is competitive in all respects with suburban communities for business development and job growth. Existing efforts such as community involvement in Business Improvement Districts and school improvements need to continue and expand into all areas of need and to include all elements of the public and private sector.



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**Vision:** A community that provides a complete range of activities, facilities, and economic development for families, and is competitive with the best suburban neighborhoods in the region.

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## MONITORING

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The four recognized Mid-City community planning groups—Normal Heights, Kensington-Talmadge, City Heights, and the Eastern Area—should continue to oversee the implementation of the Mid-City Community Plan.

### Recommendations

- Working together, the recognized community planning groups and City staff should:
  - Initiate actions to implement Plan proposals.
  - Monitor development activity for conformance to the Plan.
  - Ensure that the City’s Capital Improvements Program is consistent with the goals and recommendations of this Plan.
  - Ensure that this Plan is reviewed and updated periodically, and amended as necessary.

## DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS

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The Mid-City Communities Planned District Ordinance provides the regulations for all multifamily development and most commercial development in Mid-City. These regulations were first put in place in 1986, when it was determined that citywide zoning regulations were inadequate to address a number of development issues facing the community. Principal among these were to improve the design of multiple dwelling unit projects, upgrade parking and landscaping requirements, and maintain the pedestrian orientation of commercial nodes. Variations of these standards have since been applied to surrounding communities and incorporated into the 1997 update of the City’s zoning code.

---

**Vision:** Development that addresses the individual needs of the neighborhoods and is an asset to the community.

---

### Goals

- To ensure that adequate public facilities are available prior to the issuance of building permits for additional multifamily residential development.
- To provide development regulations that achieve the goals of this community plan while minimizing processing costs.

### Recommendations

- Ensure that adequate public facilities and infrastructure are in place prior to the construction of significant additional multifamily construction by identifying those

neighborhoods where significant deficiencies exist and restricting development until the facilities are available.

- Restrict new multifamily development within the service boundaries of schools where the local student population exceeds the following standards:
  - Elementary Schools: 100 students per acre, or the design capacity of permanent structures on existing school sites (500 students per school preferred)
  - Middle Schools: 70 students per acre, or the design capacity of permanent structures on existing school sites (1,000 students per school preferred)
  - High Schools: 70 students per acre, or the design capacity of permanent structures on existing school sites (1,500 students per school preferred)
- Modify development regulations to address the goals and recommendations of this plan. Changes to consider include the following:
  - To encourage home ownership, allow lot splits on developed properties that result in one dwelling unit per lot on small lots.
  - To allow the upgrading of residential units on small lots, provide for flexibility in the expansion and improvement of structures that do not conform to current requirements.
- To facilitate commercial development, while limiting high-density residential development, provide incentives for mixed-use developments through residential density bonuses, rather than bonuses in commercial Floor Area Ratio. This could be accomplished by raising the base FAR (eliminating the need for the lot area and mixed-use bonuses) and conditioning higher densities in commercial and/or transition zone areas on the provision of mixed-use.
- To provide for development more fitting to the character of the commercial streets, restrict future automobile sales establishments on University Avenue, Adams Avenue, 43<sup>rd</sup> Street, Fairmount Avenue, and Euclid Avenue.
- Improve the appearance of automobile sales establishments with ample landscaping, including rows of street trees both at the curb and the street yard areas.
- Consider tailored commercial zoning for the small lots on the north side of University Avenue east of College Avenue.
- Consider methods to ensure the maintenance of landscaping, including limiting the use of manufactured slopes.
- Apply open space zoning to areas designated for open space.
- Assure that public improvements, including street trees and pedestrian-oriented lighting, are provided in conjunction with street encroachment permits.
- Consider replacing the current planned district regulations with the 1997 zoning code update upon demonstration that it addresses community specific needs.

## PUBLIC TRANSIT

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The demand for bus service is extremely high, taxing even the relatively high level of service already provided. While there is frequent local bus service, service to many areas outside of Mid-City—including most employment areas—is poor, and is recommended for improvement. This can be accomplished in part by building upon the new freeway linkages provided by SR-15. To better meet the community’s transit needs, trolley service is recommended on SR-15 and should be re-evaluated for its feasibility on El Cajon Boulevard and University Avenue.

Further information is found in the **Transportation Element**.

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**Vision:** A multi-modal public transit system that is a catalyst to quality redevelopment.

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### Recommendations

- MTDB should work with the City, community groups, and business groups to develop a financing and phasing program for the implementation of the SR-15 trolley corridor.
- MTDB should work with the City, community groups, and business groups to re-assess the feasibility of the El Cajon Boulevard corridor trolley line.
- MTDB should work with North Park, City Heights, and Eastern Area communities and business groups to assess the viability of a “Shuttle Trolley” along University Avenue.

## FINANCING PLAN

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A separate Financing Plan will be adopted concurrent with this communities plan. This plan will identify funding sources and a schedule for all public facilities identified in this Plan.

**Table 4** shows a summary of preliminary cost estimates for needed facilities.

**TABLE 4  
FACILITY COST SUMMARY**

Transportation Costs	\$20,017,726
Streetscape Costs	\$46,450,000
Library Costs	\$13,175,000
Park & Recreation Costs	\$221,025,000
<b>City Total</b>	<b>\$300,667,726</b>
Schools	\$117,000,000
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$417,667,726</b>

A significant source of financing available until at least 2004 is the Federal Enterprise Community Program, which in San Diego applies to most of City Heights and Oak Park, as well as to surrounding communities. This program makes available tax-exempt bond financing for businesses and the potential for other federal funds for community revitalization, including the rehabilitation and expansion of public facilities. Additional benefits, including grant funds, may become available with the potential designation of the area as an Empowerment Zone, and/or with the implementation of Educational Academy Zone Bonds, which make available interest-free bonds for the repair and expansion of school facilities and for school training programs.

Much of the area of City Heights is a Redevelopment Area. Projected tax increment could be used to bond for necessary public facilities.

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**Vision:** A creative financing program that leverages multiple funding resources to expeditiously finance the existing public facilities gap.

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### **Recommendations**

- On an annual basis, the four community planning groups should review the status of the Financing Plan, including a review of the Capital Improvement Program, should be updated.
- Annually, City staff and community planning groups should identify potential sources of revenue and grant requests that should be initiated to obtain funds to finance the public facility short fall.
- Development impact fees should be updated annually to better assess the funding requirements for new public facilities required by new development.
- Neighborhood-based, community-based, or community-wide assessment districts may need to be organized and voted on to supplement public facility funding or maintenance.
- Redevelopment Area tax increment financing should be used to bond future necessary public facilities within the Redevelopment Plan Area.
- School facility deficiencies of \$117.0 million should be financed through a school bond, to supplement state and federal funding available. The communities should work with the City and School District to develop a sensible school facilities/joint use financial package that is well coordinated.

## **REDEVELOPMENT**

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Two Redevelopment Project Areas have been established in Mid-City: College Grove and City Heights. The College Grove project area was created to assist in the redevelopment of the Marketplace at the Grove shopping center, including the addition of freeway ramps at SR-94. **Figure 30** shows the general project area boundaries; see the redevelopment plan

documents for the precise boundaries. The City Heights project area was intended to improve the overall community of City Heights, establishing as its goals the following:

*The desire to revitalize and upgrade the existing residential and commercial properties within the Project Area in order to provide adequate infrastructure, create jobs and increase housing opportunities for Project Area residents, assure social and economic stability, and promote aesthetic and environmental improvements which would, collectively, enhance the quality of life for Project Area residents, visitors, property owners and business owners. (Redevelopment Agency Report to the City Council for the City Heights Redevelopment Project [April 8, 1992], page II-2)*

The Urban Village project surrounding 44<sup>th</sup> Street and Wightman Street is currently under construction, eventually to add commercial development to the public facilities already built.

### **Recommendations**

- Developer Impact Fees should be charged within the redevelopment project areas, with exemptions granted on a case-by-case basis according to established criteria.
- Tax increment should be used to finance existing public facilities gaps.

## **REVITALIZATION**

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A number of revitalization efforts are underway to help improve Mid-City. These short-term, multi-disciplinary improvement programs are sponsored by both public and private entities, and are addressing various areas of need, including commercial revitalization, housing rehabilitation, historic preservation, open space acquisition, street tree planting, public improvements and services, and the social needs of residents. A Revitalization Action Plan for City Heights is being implemented to address these issues.

Other revitalization programs are underway in Normal Heights, Azalea Park, and Hollywood Park and along University Avenue east of 54<sup>th</sup> Street (College and Eastern Area Planning and Economic Review). A Neighborhood Refurbishment Plan is underway on Streamview Drive. Similar programs were developed in the past for commercial strip areas of Adams Avenue, University Avenue, and El Cajon Boulevard.

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**Vision:** A revitalized sense of neighborhoods within a short period of time.

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### **Goal**

- To obtain available resources needed to ensure full implementation of the Mid-City Action Program.

## Recommendations

- Develop and implement comprehensive neighborhood revitalization programs.
- Use Revitalization Action Plans to more effectively coordinate City and other government agency, non-profit institution, business and community volunteer efforts, and investment in communities.
- Continue and expand as necessary all revitalization programs, including the significant efforts of the Normal Heights Community Development Corporation, City Heights Community Development Corporation, Business Improvement Associations, Neighborhood Housing Services, community associations, town councils, City staff, City Schools, and other agencies.
- Expand the development impact fee system as a financing tool to provide for recreation space, upgraded adjacent public rights-of-way and improved public transit.
- Explore other financing sources, including grants, private donations and tax bonding to support public improvement enhancements.

**Figure 30**  
**Mid-City Redevelopment Areas**

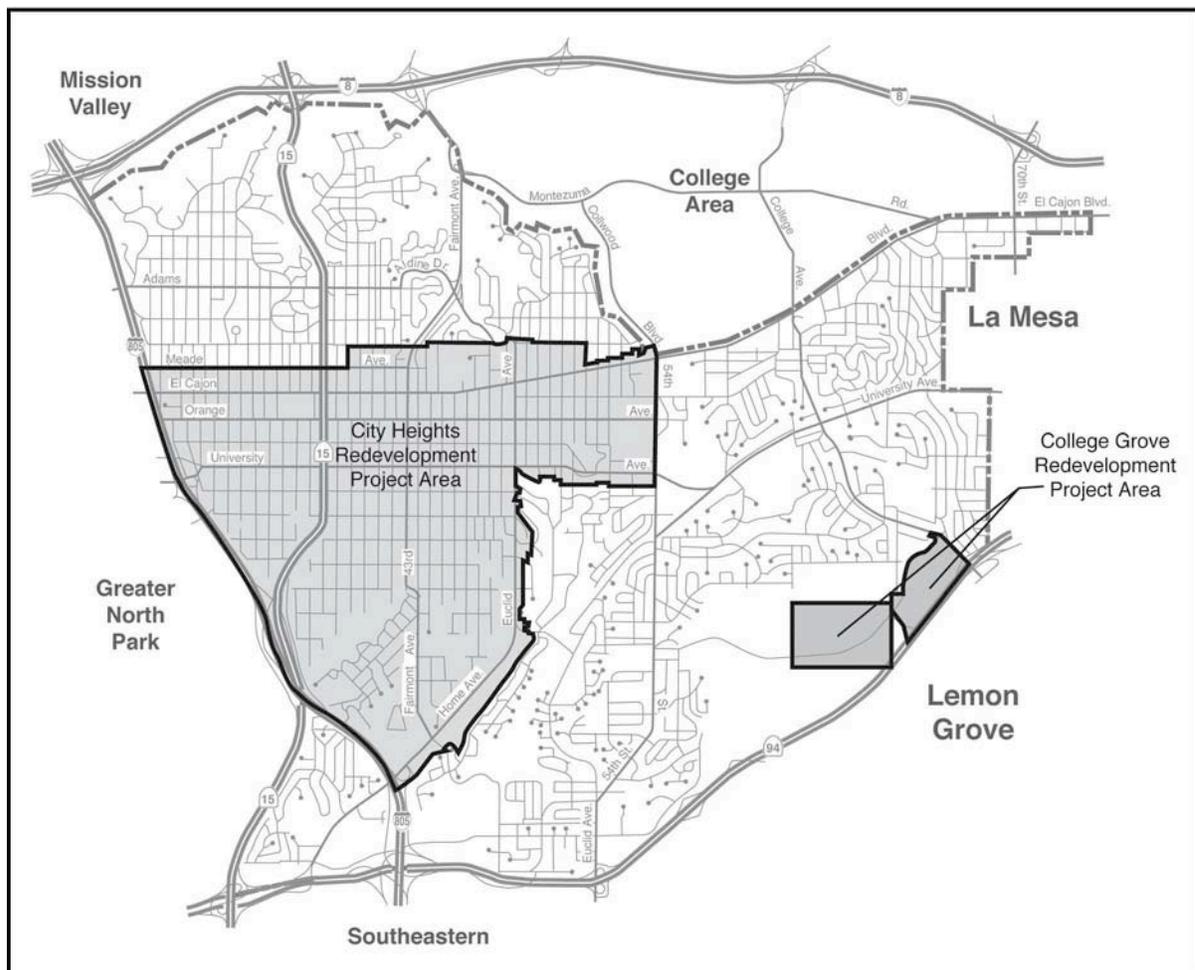
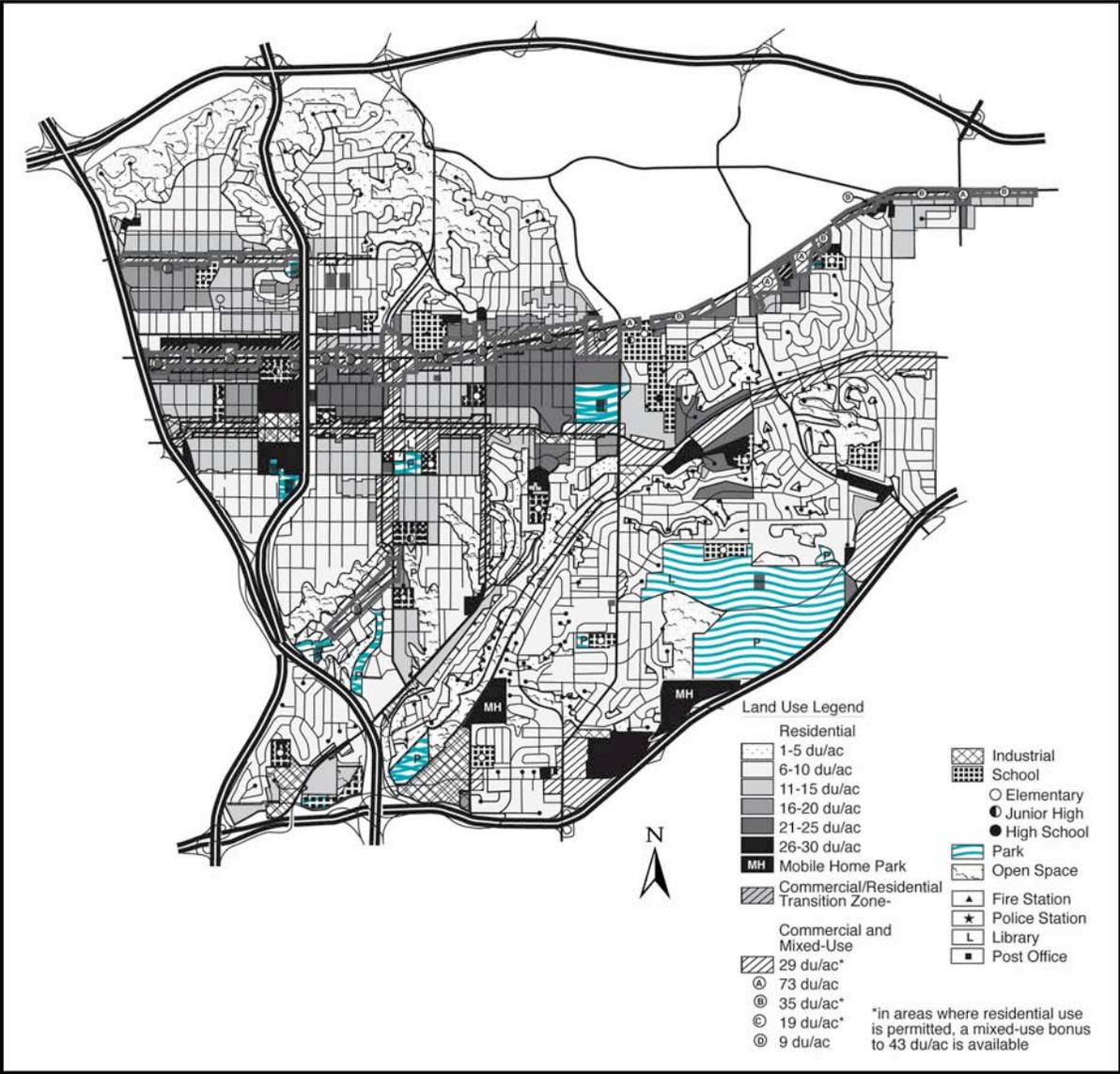


Figure 31  
 Mid-City Communities Plan Map





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## **APPENDICES**

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**Appendix A – Ancillary Documents**

**Appendix B – Bikeway Facilities Classifications**

**Appendix D – Traffic Calming Devices**

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## APPENDIX A – ANCILLARY DOCUMENTS

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*Adams Avenue Master Plan - Master Plan for Commercial Revitalization of Adams Avenue*, Barret Consulting/Marum Associates, 1992.

*Adams Avenue Parking Study*, Adams Avenue Business Association, August 1985.

*Affordable Housing: Creating More Livable Communities, Report on Conference Proceedings*, San Diego Housing Commission and Others, March 1, 1991.

*An Economic Development Strategy for the City Heights Commercial Area*, Michael Jenkins, MPA, JD, March 1986.

*(Draft) Chollas Canyon Improvement Project Master Plan Summary*, PELA Landscape Architects, February 1994.

*Chollas Creek Engineering Report*, Barry Consulting Group, October 15, 1993.

*City Heights Redevelopment Plan*, Redevelopment Agency of the City of San Diego, April 28, 1992.

*Creating Affordable Housing for San Diegans*, The San Diego Housing Trust Fund Task Force, September 1989.

*Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design*.

*The Design Study for the Commercial Revitalization of El Cajon Boulevard*, Land Studio, no date.

*Design Manual for the Normal Heights Demonstration Area and the City Heights Demonstration Area*, HCH Associates/Gary Coad, April 1984.

*Economic Analysis of the Mid-City Community*, Goodkin/Criterion, October 1983.

*Historical Greater Mid-City San Diego Preservation Strategy*, Milford Wayne Donaldson, FAIA, Inc., January 8, 1997

*Master Plan Report for the University Avenue Improvement Project*, Estrada Land Planning, September 1993.

*Mid-City Business Survey*, Williams-Kuelbelbeck & Associates, Inc. June 14, 1983.

*Mid-City & North Park Revitalization Plan*, Gary Rose Weber for the City of San Diego Planning Department, November 1988.

*Mid-City Redevelopment Feasibility Study*, Economic Research Associates, April 1988.

*Mountain View District: A Re-Building Plan for Normal Heights*, Community Design Assistance Team, July 30, 1985.

*Oak Park/Webster Commercial Area Revitalization Study, Volumes 1, 2 & 3*, Quinney & Associates/Estrada Land Planning, March 1988.

*Parking Analysis for the Mid-City Revitalization Study*, Land Studio/Stephen George and Associates, April 1987.

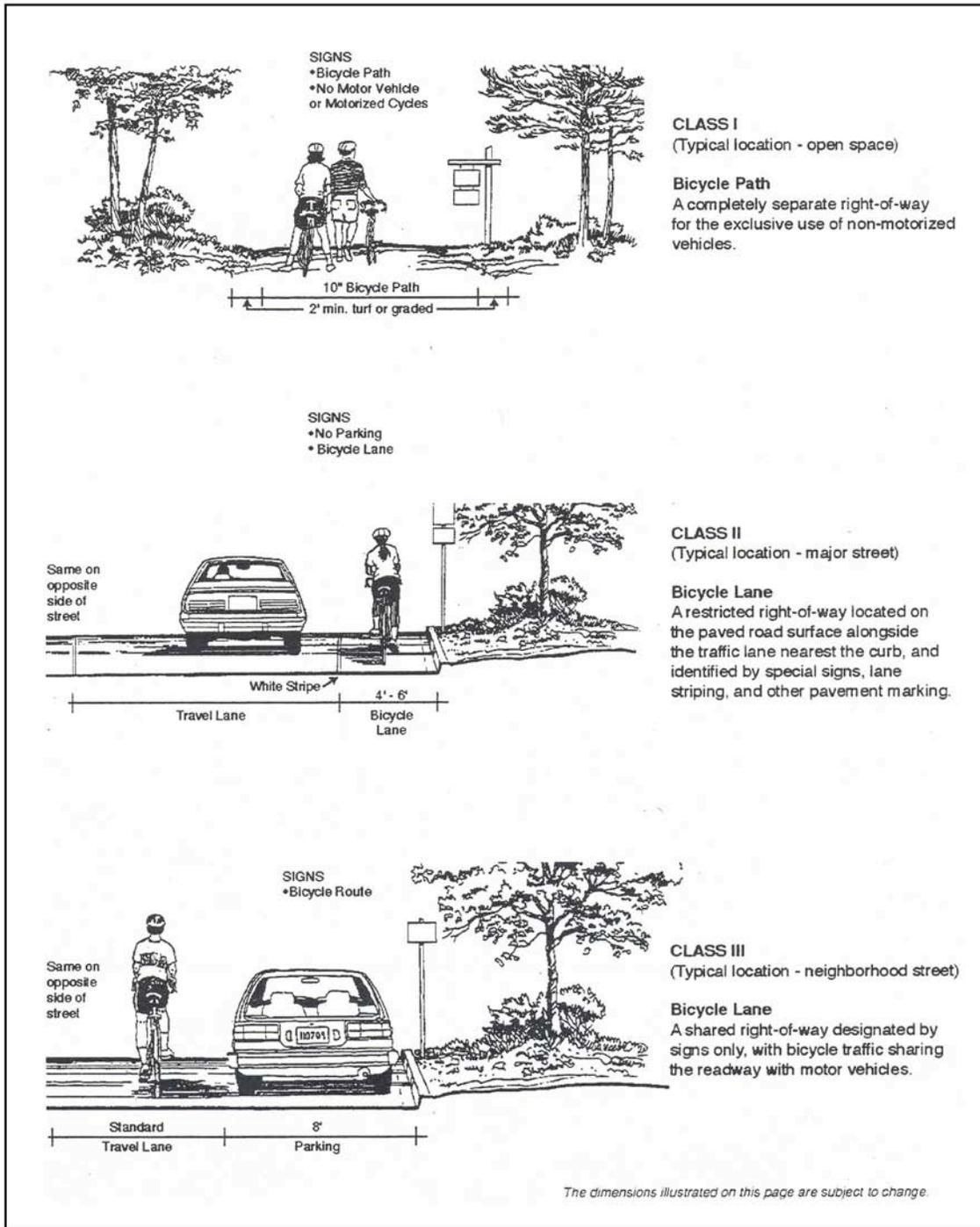
*Problem Properties – A Profile of Residential Deterioration in the City Heights Community*, JoEllen Anderson for San Diego Neighborhood Housing Services, Inc. March 1988.

*Physical Rehabilitation Guidelines*, Gary Rose Weber for the City of San Diego Planning Department, 1989.

*Report on the Village Charette: Azalea and Hollywood Park Neighborhoods*, Mrs. Myrtle Akili, REDD Coordinating and Consulting, January 1997.

*Zoning & Land Use in One of San Diego's Older Urban Areas*, JoEllen Anderson for San Diego Neighborhood Housing Services and the City Heights Community Development Corporation, July 1988.

## APPENDIX B – BIKEWAY FACILITIES CLASSIFICATIONS

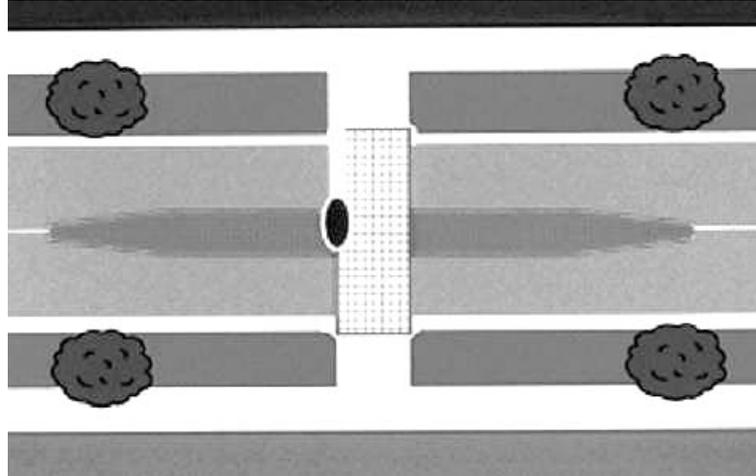


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## APPENDIX D – TRAFFIC CALMING DEVICES

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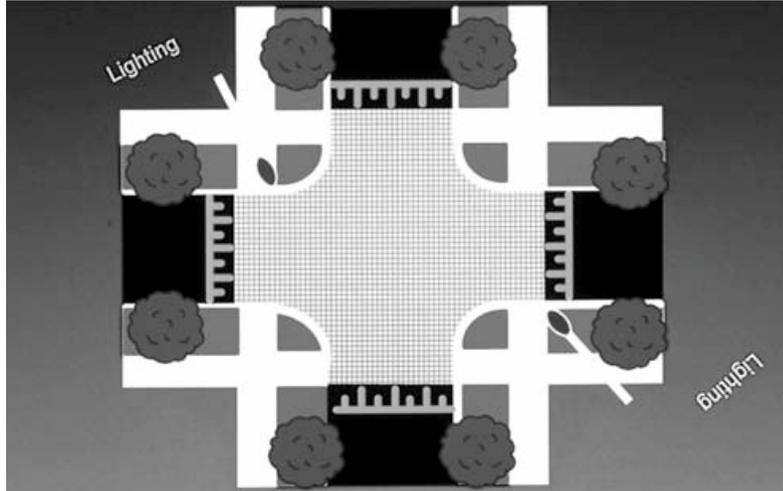
By Michael Wallwork, P.E., and Dan Burden



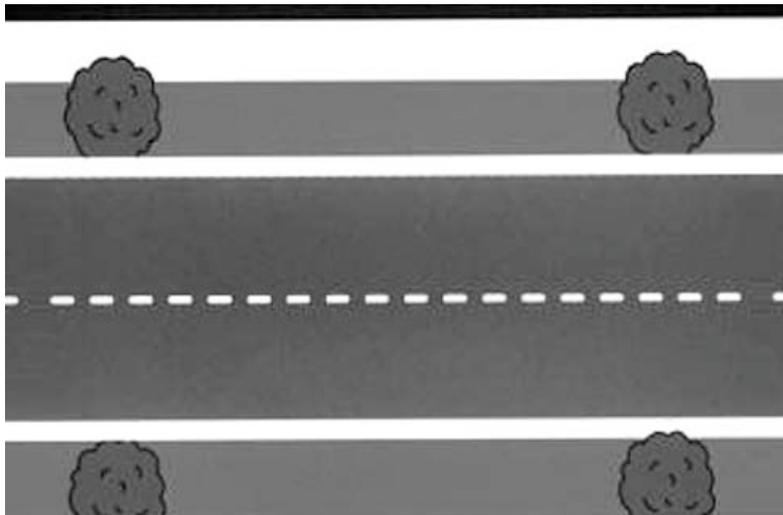
### TRAFFIC CALMING DEVICES

Often, neighborhood traffic control problems are solved by relatively low-cost devices. A range of devices is available. Their benefits and effectiveness depend on their frequency of application, where they are used and the problem they are intended to reduce. Often a single device is not adequate to solve a problem and a series of devices are usually necessary.

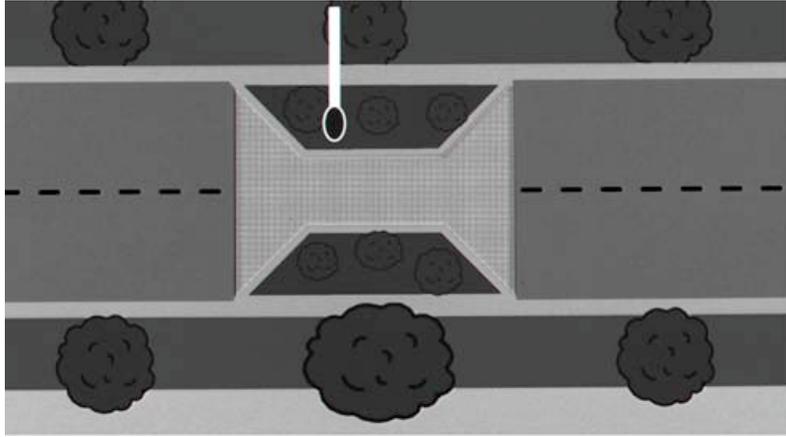
## INTERSECTION HUMPS



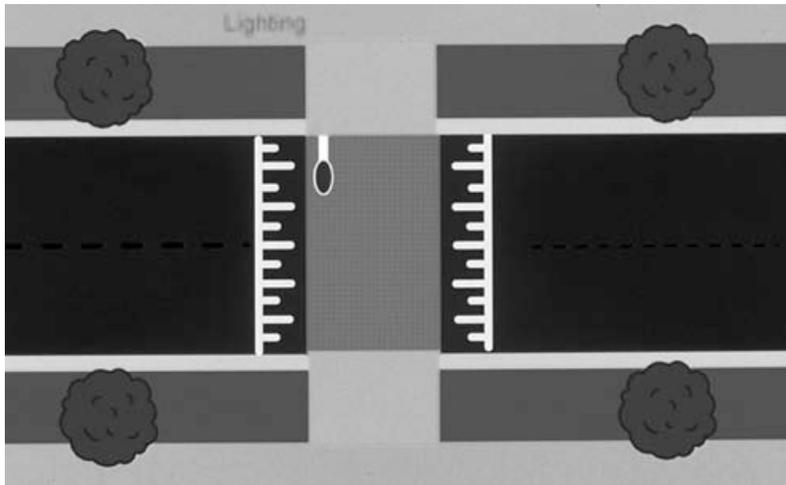
## LANDSCAPED ROADWAY



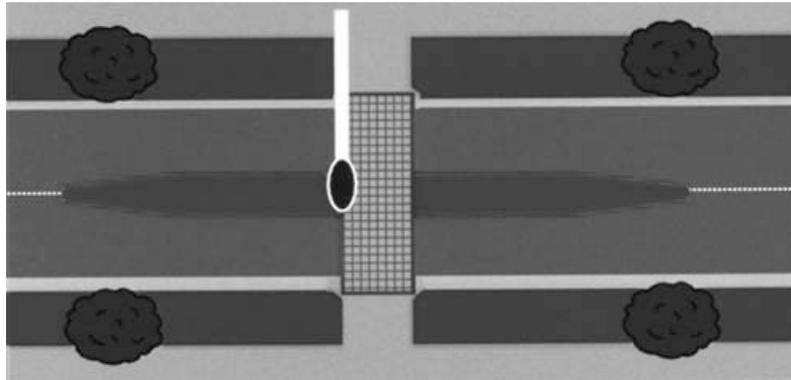
**ONE-WAY SPEED HUMP, SLOW POINT**



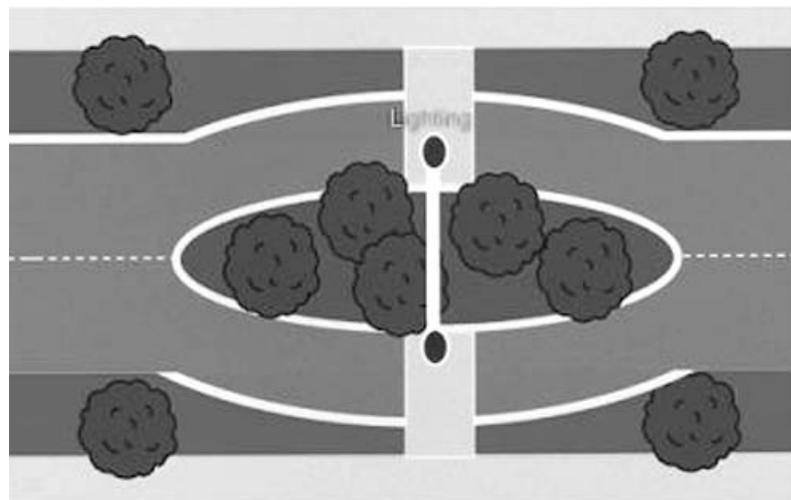
**SPEED TABLE**



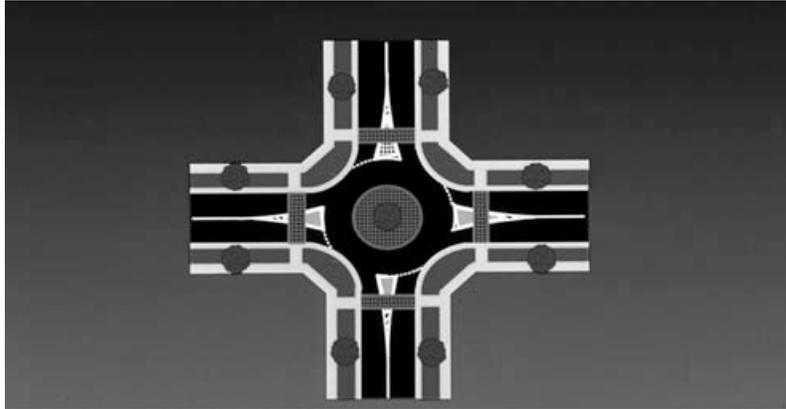
**PEDESTRIAN SPEED TABLE AND MEDIAN REFUGE**



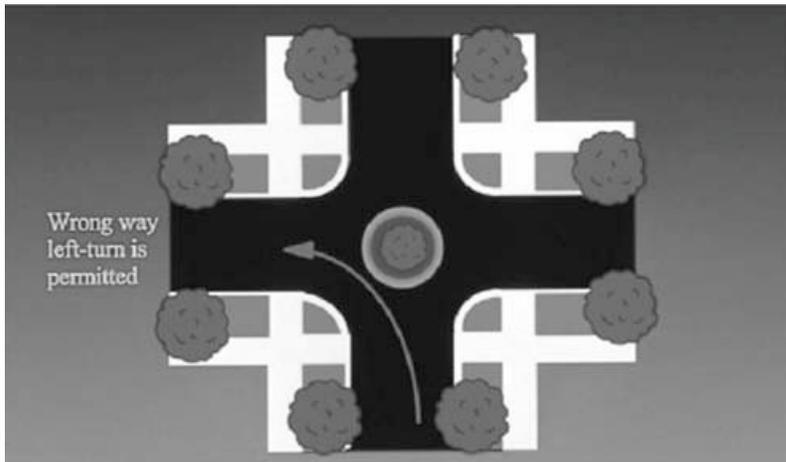
**SHORT MEDIAN**



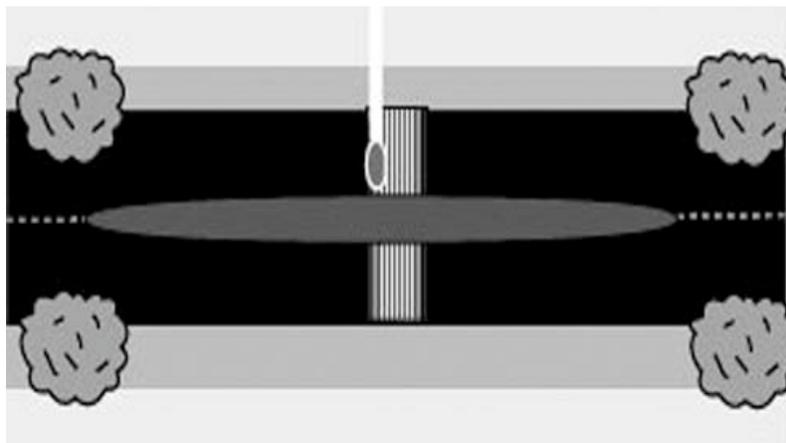
## ROUNDAABOUT



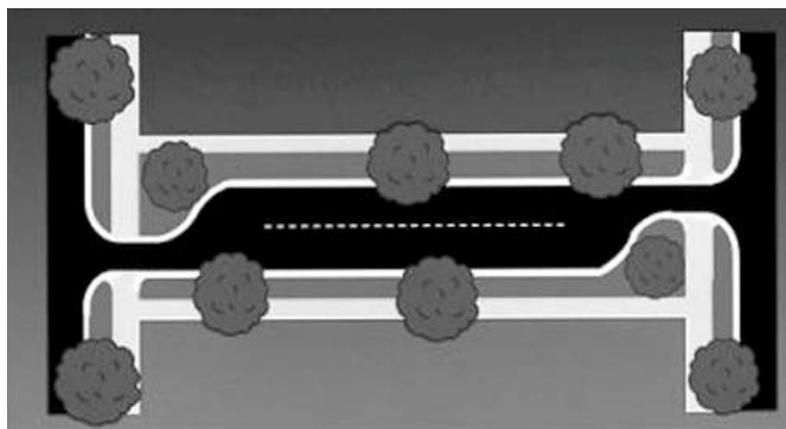
## MINI-TRAFFIC CIRCLE



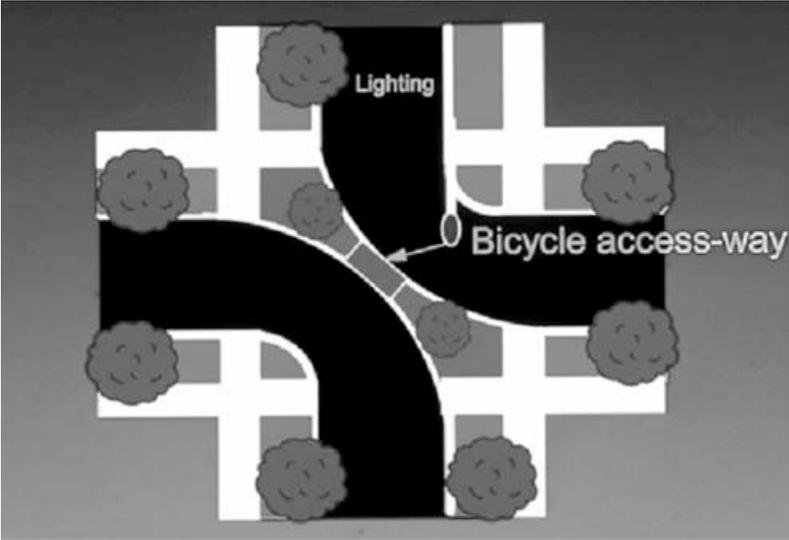
**SLOW POINT WITH SPEED HUMP**



**MODIFIED STREET DESIGN**



**DIAGONAL DIVERTER**



**STAR DIVERTER**

